Coalition Coercion & Compromise

Diplomacy of the Gulf Crisis, 1990–91

Gordon S. Brown

Foreword by
Casimir A. Yost

An Institute for the Study of Diplomacy Monograph

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Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

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Foreword

THE 1990–91 GULF CRISIS CONCLUDED WITH THE WIDESPREAD CONviction that it was a hugely successful American effort in crisis management. Six years later, however, this perception has changed: Saddam Hussein's survival, the inconclusive results of the war, and the emergence of new information have all contributed to a sense, on the part of some, that the management of the crisis was flawed and the ultimate outcome of U.S. efforts, unsatisfactory. This paradox has brought grist to the mills of numerous analysts and historians and will undoubtedly do so for some time to come. Why, then, another look at the crisis at this time?

A singular feature of the Gulf Crisis was the successful American effort to form, coordinate, maintain, and successfully employ an international coalition of unprecedented size and complexity. That effort was a real triumph of American diplomacy, without which the ending of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait would probably not have been possible. However, the histories and studies to date have dealt only indirectly with the coalition-building effort. This study, by a diplomatic veteran of the crisis, is an effort to fill that gap—to look at the diplomacy of the coalition effort and its results, as well as to draw a number of lessons for future diplomacy.

The Institute has previously published a number of case studies on specific aspects of the crisis. In keeping with the Institute's focus on the implementation of foreign policy, Ambassador Gordon Brown brought to this study the per-

spectives of a senior diplomat who had direct, firsthand experience in the American coalition-building efforts, as a result of his service as General H. Norman Schwarzkopf's political adviser during the crisis. Ambassador Brown has also provided insight into the interaction between diplomatic efforts to avoid conflict and military operational requirements. His study has benefited from his long service in the Near East and from information and insights provided in interviews with over twenty American officials who held senior policy-making or diplomatic positions during the crisis.

We are grateful to Ambassador Brown for his contribution to the future scholarship on this important moment in history.

Casimir A. Yost
Director
Institute for the
Study of Diplomacy

Preface and Acknowledgments

From Saddam Hussein's continued provocations, through the personal war stories that so many Americans still tell, to the trauma of the Gulf War Syndrome issue, the 1990–91 Gulf Crisis continues to intrigue and to exasperate us. The euphoria that followed the coalition's victory seems to have degenerated into a kind of bewilderment as to why things didn't quite work out right. Perhaps the motivation for undertaking this study was the desire to show that, in fact, some things did work out right.

The American diplomacy of the crisis was, in short, extremely effective: the United States mustered a large international coalition to pursue goals that it had the major voice in defining, achieved its stated goals, and convinced others to pay much of the bill. And yet the coalition, and its dynamic, seems to have been largely forgotten as a subject for analysis in most of the books and articles written on the crisis so far. I am thankful to the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy for its sponsorship of this effort to open a discussion on the role of diplomacy and the impact of the coalition on the unfolding of the Gulf Crisis.

This study is not a definitive history of the coalition. Information is still emerging, and the contributions of key participants, such as President Bush, are yet to be published. In the absence of Iraqi documentation, moreover, the motivations and tactics of the Baghdad regime can only be deduced. Readers interested in details of the dealings among the coalition partners, or of their direct and indi-

rect negotiations with the Iraqis, will find in the bibliography a useful list of histories, memoirs, and analyses that have already been published, and on which this work is based. While I have tried to stick to the generally agreed facts, there are of course many things in the record that remain unclear, and many others still subject to interpretation. I have chosen not to footnote what is, by its nature, more an essay on the diplomatic effect of the coalition than a history.

An important element of this study is the information gathered during interviews with almost two dozen American officials who held senior policy-making or executing responsibilities in Washington and in our embassies abroad during the crisis. Their insights were extremely valuable in attempting to understand the dynamics of the coalition and its role in the crisis. But as they were offered strictly "on background," I cannot cite them explicitly, but can thank them for their patience, knowledge, and willingness to contribute to this essay: Morton I. Abramowitz, Ambassador to Turkey; Edward Casey, Deputy Chief of Mission Madrid; Paul M. Cleveland, Ambassador to Malaysia; Walter J. P. Curley, Ambassador to France; Charles F. Dunbar, Ambassador to Yemen; Chas W. Freeman, Jr., Ambassador to Saudi Arabia; Robert Grey, Political Counsellor, U.S. Mission to the UN; Richard N. Haass, Director of Middle East Affairs, National Security Council; Christopher G. Hanken, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, Department of State; Richard Hecklinger, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, Department of State; Robert Kimmitt, Under Secretary, Department of State; James R. Lilley, Ambassador to China; Mark Lissfeldt, Deputy Chief of Mission Paris; David L. Mack, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Near East Affairs, Department of State; Jack F. Matlock, Ambassador to the

U.S.S.R.; Thomas E. McNamara, Ambassador to Colombia; Richard H. Melton, Ambassador to Brazil; Robert B. Oakley, Ambassador to Pakistan; Thomas R. Pickering, Ambassador to the UN; William Ramsey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, Department of State; Brent Scowcroft, National Security Adviser to the President; Michael A. Ussery, Ambassador to Morocco; and Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Of course, any errors of fact or analysis are mine alone, not of the informants.

Finally, I would like to thank Peter E. Paraschos, my editor, for his patience, and Olivia, my wife, for her support, forbearance, and time lost at the computer.

GORDON S. BROWN

1

Introduction

Iraq's 1990 invasion and annexation of Kuwait opened an intense period of crisis diplomacy and, eventually, military action to reverse the Iraqi conquest. The diplomacy of the Gulf Crisis (August 1990–March 1991) was characterized by the formation of an unprecedented international coalition that demanded Iraqi compliance with its conditions, opened hostilities when Iraq refused to meet them, and dictated the terms of the subsequent peace. The assembling, nurturing, and guiding of the coalition was a great success of American diplomacy, achieved despite differences among the coalition's members and Iraq's efforts to exploit those differences.

The success of the coalition effort led to suggestions at the time that it could set a new model for international cooperation, under United Nation's auspices, for resolution of international crises. In retrospect, however, it is clear that many of the conditions that assured the success of the 1990–91 effort were unique and that the Gulf coalition may have few comparable successors. Nonetheless, the coalition experience may contain some lessons for future diplomacy, particularly in view of the continued expansion of the number of international crisis management and peace-keeping efforts.

The group of thirty-six nations that contributed to the coalition effort had one goal in common: to bring about

an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in accordance with UN resolutions. Beyond that, their political objectives varied widely and their preferred tactics still more. The organization of the coalition consequently reflected the disparity of its members; it was, in many ways, little more than a set of interlinking groups connected through bilateral diplomacy and the broad policy objectives established in the UN Security Council resolutions. There never was a central policy coordinating mechanism, and any effort to establish one, moreover, would probably not have been fruitful given the contrasting political and tactical considerations of its members. It was thus left to American diplomacy to provide the essential coordinating element of the coalition, both at the United Nations and through active bilateral contacts with all the parties. Such a central position enabled the United States to shape consensus within the coalition, or when consensus did not fully exist, to interpret one favorably.

The coalition was both an instrument and a shaper of policy. Within the coalition, the key internal dynamic was the debate between those who believed massive external pressure was the only means to compel Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and those who thought it would be necessary to satisfy some of Iraq's conditions. The United States, the United Kingdom, and most of the Gulf Arab partners opted early on for the coercive side of this debate, while other key coalition countries, including the Soviet Union, China, and France, favored the conciliatory side. In the end, the scales were tipped in favor of coercion almost as much by Iraqi inflexibility as by any coalition decision or American leadership. Finally, calculations stemming from the disparate, fragile nature of the coalition influenced the separate decisions of the United States and Iraq to hasten the progression toward war.

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A Standing Start

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, caught Kuwait's rulers and their friends in the international community unprepared both militarily and diplomatically. Although Kuwait's military forces could have done little more than delay the takeover of their country by the battle-tested Iraqi troops, even had they been on full alert, its government's traditional reliance on external diplomatic support to assure its security was for the most part unmobilized at the time of the invasion. Moreover, Kuwait's negotiating tactics in its acrimonious financial dispute with Iraq, which preceded the invasion, had left it largely isolated in Arab circles and in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), to the degree that many observers expected that the "crisis" would end with Iraq successfully extorting a substantial increase in aid from Kuwait. When the Iraqi troops took control in Kuwait City and the ruling family fled in disarray to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait found its potential allies quite unprepared for the serious turn the crisis had taken.

Kuwait's traditional friends, the United States among them, had more important concerns in the summer of 1990 than what was viewed as and described by many Arab leaders—prior to August 2—as an inter-Arab dispute that would most likely be resolved by traditional measures of consultation and conciliation. Outside the

Persian Gulf, major changes in the world's long-standing diplomatic and security arrangements were underway. The growing economic and leadership crisis in the Soviet Union, the stability of a Central Europe poised on the brink of German reunification, or the unpredictability of China's post–Tiananmen Square behavior were preoccupying concerns for governments seeking to manage the transition to a new post–Cold War order successfully. A successful transition, it was widely believed, depended on fostering a spirit of international cooperation with the Soviet Union under the leadership of its "new thinkers," such as Chairman Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

In the Middle East itself, stalemate in the Arab-Israeli peace process, increasing violence by Palestinians, and the formation of a hard-line Likud government in Israel had all seemed more threatening to the region's stability than Iraq's sudden demands against Kuwait. Few of the non-Arab governments that had historically supported Kuwait's independence and integrity—which included the United States and other oil-importing countries of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—would have considered it likely that the crisis about to be triggered by Iraq would absorb much of their attention for the next six months and beyond.

Iraqi Diplomacy: Anticipating the Starting Gun

In comparison to the lack of diplomatic preparation by Kuwait and its supporters, the Iraqis, following the end of their bloody and disastrous war against Iran in 1988, had been busy building a new basis of diplomatic support to supplant the Arab aid they had received during the fighting. Whether or not Saddam harbored a long-standing

plan to move against Kuwait, he had by the summer of 1990 developed an effective campaign to gain the leadership of the Arab world, which ultimately provided him with substantial support for his Kuwaiti gamble.

Saddam's diplomacy had long courted the have-nots of the Arab League, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Yemenis, Mauritanians, and Sudanese; Iraq had gained their support both as a provider of aid (particularly military equipment and training) and as the most muscular defender of Arab causes. Not surprisingly, those governments were sympathetic to Iraq in its dispute with Kuwait, even after the invasion. Iraq had also effectively enlisted Jordan by a combination of economic support through concessional oil sales and active trade, successful appeals to the Palestinian community as the Arab leader against Israel, and strategic cooperation through the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC).

Egypt, also a member of the ACC along with Yemen, was more chary than Jordan about Iraq's pretensions to Arab leadership, but nonetheless appreciated Iraq's help in its 1989 readmission to good standing in the Arab League, and held a substantial economic interest in the remittances of the thousands of Egyptians who had been working in Iraq since the Iraq-Iran War. The Saudis and other conservative members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), on the other hand, were concerned about the formation of the ACC as a more radical block on their western borders. Saddam was able, however, to put them on the defensive within the Arab community by making continued demands for financial assistance and more favorable oil sales policies, and particularly by calls for Arab unity and action against Israel.

In the months leading up to the invasion, Saddam had succeeded in gaining a considerable amount of backing

among Arab League governments and public opinion through a tactic of radicalizing the dialogue about issues such as the flood of Russian immigrants into Israel and the increasingly violent stalemate in the Middle East peace process. His propaganda skillfully played on popular concerns that the end of the Cold War would, unless countered by active Arab policies, give unacceptable advantage to Israel and its American superpower supporter.

The capstone of this effort to unite the Arabs behind Iraq was put in place in late May 1990, when an Arab League summit held in Baghdad, and manipulated effectively by the Iraqis, took a confrontational stance toward Israel and the United States. Although the summit was not attended by Saddam's enemy—Syrian President Assad—or five other Arab heads of state, it nonetheless affirmed in its communique, "Iraq's right to take all necessary measures to defend its national sovereignty." At a minimum, Saddam had rallied sufficient support to assure himself of a divided Arab League reaction, even when his eventual action was directed against Kuwait rather than a target more easily identified with American or Israeli interests.

The very boldness of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and the initially mixed Arab reaction to it, may have led Saddam to make a major miscalculation: namely, the decision not just to press his financial and border claims against Kuwait, but to enforce old Iraqi claims against the state itself. Saddam may have believed that his support in the Arab League, coupled with widespread Arab antipathy for Kuwait's wealth, pride, condescension, and ties to the West would allow him to get away with such a bold move. But his effort to overthrow, and then eliminate, the Kuwaiti state flew in the face of an Arab political tradition of over forty years standing—that conflicts would be resolved within the existing Arab state structure. Interna-

tional legality aside, Saddam had torn up the rulebook in a way that could threaten any Arab regime.

The International Community Responds

While caught unprepared by the invasion and the sudden fall of Kuwait, the international community did respond rapidly. The enormity of Saddam's act—unprovoked aggression against a sovereign member of the United Nations—was such a violation of international law that support for a prompt reaction was virtually universal. The vehicle for obtaining an authoritative international statement of condemnation was the UN, which both had a ready forum for obtaining such a statement and an accepted responsibility to deal with threats to the sovereignty of one of its members.

The United States led the way in shaping the initial UN reaction, due partly to the fact that news of the invasion broke late in the afternoon in Washington while key decisionmakers were still at work. The Deputies' Committee of the National Security Council, an interagency crisis management group with long experience working together, moved rapidly in analyzing the situation and recommending courses of immediate action. George Bush, a President long exposed to the management of foreign affairs (as director of Central Intelligence and ambassador to the United Nations and China), was prepared to play an active role.

The first American concern was to organize an international response that would deny the Iraqis, to the greatest extent possible, any profit from their military victory. The Deputies' Committee, which coordinated the U.S. response that first night and for the duration of the crisis, consequently recommended an immediate freeze on Iraqi

and Kuwaiti assets and credits abroad, as well as a trade embargo. When the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United Nations received no instructions from his scattered government authorities, the U.S. ambassador was asked to call for an immediate meeting of the Security Council to achieve a second aim—an authoritative international condemnation of Iraq's action. A U.S. aircraft carrier battle group was also ordered to the Indian Ocean for possible use and as a signal to Saddam of U.S. concern and seriousness of purpose. At the same time, President Bush began the cycle of "telephone diplomacy" that he was to conduct so effectively throughout the crisis, for example, by talking to several North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) heads of government about the need for an immediate UN resolution of condemnation and the freeze of assets and trade. He also called the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, and others to discuss the need for immediate condemnation and to ascertain the Arab reaction. Secretary of State Baker—fortuitously in the Soviet Union at the time—met expeditiously with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and convinced him to issue a joint communique that both condemned the Iraqi invasion and endorsed trade sanctions.

By the end of August 2, the pattern of the diplomatic response to Iraq's invasion had already taken shape. The effort was designed to isolate Iraq internationally and make its occupation costly both politically and economically. The UN was an essential part of this effort from the beginning, providing not only a forum for the necessary quick international condemnation, but also international political authority for actions that might otherwise be difficult for some governments to take. The first of many UN resolutions, Security Council Resolution 660 (passed over Yemen's lone abstention), condemned the Iraqi aggres-

sion while calling for unconditional withdrawal and negotiations between the parties to resolve the dispute. The U.S. freeze on trade and assets also became effective on August 2. (Interestingly, an effort within the interagency group to expand its coverage to American subsidiaries abroad was turned down in the interest of preserving good relations with potential allies—an indication of the emphasis on joint action even at this early moment.) The American action was rapidly followed by similar actions in France and the United Kingdom. Other governments were already moving in the same direction, and the question of broader internationally agreed sanctions was actively under consideration among members of the Security Council. Equally important, Resolution 660 had the endorsement of Iraq's old ally, the Soviet Union, and the backing of an almost unprecedented Soviet-American joint statement—both strong, early signals to Iraq that its evident hopes of playing the major powers against each other was not likely to work in the new international political alignment.

Resolution 660 supported the possibility of an Arab League mediation effort to resolve the Iraq-Kuwait dispute, and Arab leaders almost immediately began a round of consultations designed to settle the crisis in a way that would avoid outside intervention in what most preferred to keep as an inter-Arab dispute. The League foreign ministers (already in Cairo for a previously scheduled meeting) were being pressured by the Kuwaitis, the Syrians, and others for a resolution of condemnation similar to the UN's. Their efforts were assisted, perhaps unwittingly, by the Iraqi emissary who was unbending in his refusal to offer concessions. However, action on a resolution was delayed to give time for personal diplomacy by a number of Arab leaders, particularly by King Hussein of Jordan,

who was caught uncomfortably between his Iraqi and Saudi benefactors. With the aim of arranging a summit meeting at which a conciliation could take place short of condemning Iraq's action, King Hussein traveled to Baghdad to secure Saddam's agreement, in principle, to withdrawal and a subsequent summit, but failed get the degree of commitment from Iraq needed to stave off League action. On the evening of August 3, the League's foreign ministers voted on a highly contested resolution. Passed by fourteen of the organization's twenty-two members, it condemned the Iraqi aggression and demanded immediate and unconditional withdrawal, even while calling for an emergency summit and rejecting any foreign intervention in the affair. Although the summit would eventually take place, the split in Arab ranks at Cairo persisted and effectively closed off any coherent Arab action to resolve the conflict, leaving each state to follow its own self-interest in the rapidly broadening crisis.

3

Gaining Consensus

THE ESSENTIAL UNDERPINNINGS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO counter Iraq's occupation of Kuwait were rapidly put in place by the Security Council condemnation, coupled with the expanding freeze of Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets and trade by the major economic powers. By themselves, however, those measures were unlikely to reverse Iraq's action at any early date. Saddam Hussein had in the past shrugged off UN condemnations of his human rights and other behavior, and the economic sanctions would need to be considerably expanded and tightened before they constituted meaningful pressure on his regime. In the fluid political situation that followed the first days of the crisis, many governments remained hopeful that an Arab solution could be found before they would be called to make the more difficult decisions of adding a coercive element to the moral force of the initial measures.

Negotiations were proceeding in New York to draft a broad sanctions regime, with general agreement that such measures would be necessary if Iraq did not withdraw rapidly. At the same time, individual UN members were taking unilateral steps. Canada, the European Community (EC) countries, and (a bit more reluctantly) Japan instituted their own assets freezes and embargoes under American prodding. Even China agreed to institute a freeze on arms sales. Confrontation with Iraq would, how-

ever, involve painful costs to many economies. For the Soviet Union, Turkey, Japan, France, Germany, Egypt, India, and numerous other countries, implementation of the sanctions being discussed in New York would disrupt major trade, military, or energy relationships with Iraq.

The Soviet Union, which had been a major political and trading partner of Iraq, began to show particular signs of unease. The strongly critical line that Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had agreed to in the joint communique with the United States came under criticism from pro-Iraqi "old thinkers" in the government, obliging him to urge on August 4 that there be a pause in passing any further UN resolutions until Iraq's readiness to withdraw peacefully had been thoroughly tested. Turkey, on the other hand, seemed to be leaning toward closing the Iraqi oil pipeline across its territory, apparently concluding—in spite of considerable Iraqi pressure to keep the line open—that its need to improve its relations with the United States and the EC countries was greater than the gains it derived from its relationship with its neighbor, or the substantial revenues that it had earned from moving Iraqi oil exports.

Iraq's response to the international condemnation was to adopt a hard line. The Arab League condemnation had appeared only to harden Iraq's position that the overthrow of Kuwait's ruling family was irreversible. Moreover, continued efforts by Arab leaders, such as Yasser Arafat, to find a negotiated solution—usually involving major Kuwaiti concessions—must have given Saddam hope that he could keep much of his gains. Playing for time, the Iraqis helped torpedo an early convening of the proposed Arab summit, consolidated their positions in Kuwait, and even deployed troops south of the city toward the Saudi border.

The U.S. Reaction and the Saudi Invitation

American diplomacy following the invasion was at first reactive and defensive, seeking to limit Iraq's potential gains and to enlist international opposition to the takeover of a friendly state. A number of developments, however, soon firmed up the U.S. government's determination to contest the occupation actively and, ultimately, to roll it back.

The first of these circumstances was the fortuitously scheduled meeting between President Bush and British Prime Minister Thatcher, on the day after the invasion. During their talks in Aspen, Colorado, the two leaders rapidly established a common appreciation of the underlying issue, which to them was the absolute unacceptability of an invasion and attempted subjugation of one sovereign state by another. To Bush and Thatcher, who viewed Iraq's invasion against a background of European pre-World War II history, appeasement of such unprovoked aggression would undermine a basic principle of world order. Whatever that order might be evolving toward in the wake of the Cold War, they felt, it absolutely required that UN member states mutually respect each others' sovereignty, and that Iraq's breach of this rule demanded a concerted response by all members of the world body. The widest possible international coalition should be enlisted, they agreed, to confirm the validity of this principle and to oblige Iraq's conformity.

The tactic was to make the dispute one between Iraq and the world, not just with Kuwait and its champions. This principle of international legality was the bedrock of the American and British position throughout the crisis, but was also important in obtaining the support of many of the UN's smaller and more vulnerable states, which

accepted it (but not necessarily the Bush-Thatcher corollary of no appeasement) because of its potential relevance to their situations.

Armed with this determination, President Bush met with his National Security Council advisers on August 4 at Camp David. At that meeting, a further step was taken by deciding on a basic strategy to achieve Iraqi withdrawal: the United States would lead in the formation of an international coalition designed to apply coercive diplomacy against Iraq, initially through diplomatic isolation and economic sanctions, but possibly through other, as yet not agreed, measures. (At that moment, even the international sanctions regime had not yet been agreed in New York.) The international implications of such an active role were already clear. The President and his colleagues had been made aware, from their conversations with other leaders (such as Turkish Prime Minister Ozal) that effective sanctions would be costly to some potential allies and that formation of an effective coalition would have to address their needs. Even though the coalition was still more a concept than a reality, a measure of the President's determination to roll back the Iraqi invasion surfaced shortly after the Camp David meeting, when, to the surprise of some of his advisers, he declared to the press that Iraq's occupation "would not stand."

What role, if any, the Arabs would choose to play in the hoped for coalition was, as yet, highly unclear. The principles of international law and organization that played so large a part in forming the English and American positions (as well as the deliberations in the UN) were, however, less important in the Arab arena than regional considerations—particularly the traditional reluctance of Arab governments to allow outside intervention in inter-Arab disputes. Egypt, Jordan, and other Arab friends of

the United States wanted, if at all possible, to find an Arab solution that would spare them the dilemma of having to choose among Arab colleagues or between an outside intervention and Iraq.

The Saudis were potentially the most threatened by Iraq's invasion and Saddam's rejection of the Kuwaiti ruling family's legitimacy, but they were walking along a knife's edge. Although they were still encouraging others to work toward an inter-Arab negotiated settlement that would avoid foreign intervention, their concerns over Iraqi intentions were heightened by a growing stream of reports—their own and American—indicating threatening Iraqi deployments along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border and possible armed incursions into Saudi Arabia itself. Required to defend Kuwait's interests by traditional ties and mutual membership in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Saudis now had to fear for their own security as well.

While they needed to look beyond the GCC for meaningful defense support, their defense relationship with the United States was ambiguous. Conscious of Arab sentiment against foreign military ties, and their special responsibilities to protect the Islamic holy places from non-Muslim defilement, the Saudis had for many years resisted open defense cooperation with the United States, even while relying on a presumption of American support in emergencies. In the present crisis, they indeed needed outside help to resist Iraq's pressure and defend Kuwait, but they could not afford to enrage Muslim and Arab nationalist sentiment, or the Iraqi regime, by asking for foreign assistance unless it were to be truly and rapidly effective in deterring the threat of an attack.

A series of high-level U.S.-Saudi exchanges in the days following the invasion, culminating in the visit to Saudi Arabia by Defense Secretary Cheney and U.S. Central

Command's General Schwarzkopf, clarified Saudi thinking on two key points: they were vulnerable to the potential threat posed by Iraq's forces in Kuwait, and an American deployment could be both massive and swift enough to be an effective deterrent—and limited to the duration of the crisis. Assured on these points, and perhaps discouraged by the impasse in Arab settlement efforts, King Fahd made his historic August 6 decision to invite an American and international military deployment to defend Saudi Arabia. American aircraft and airborne troops began flowing into Saudi Arabia that very night (often without waiting for proper overflight, landing, or ground support arrangements) in what would grow to become the most intense air deployment in history. The United States had made a major commitment to defend an old friend, implying a heightened, but still unilateral, commitment to overturn the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

Coercive Diplomacy Internationalized

Less than a week after the invasion of Kuwait, and in the absence of any conciliatory moves by Iraq or successful Arab mediation, a limited military response was taking shape. So far, it involved less than a handful of governments and only the goal of defending Saudi Arabia against further Iraqi expansionist moves. But it would expand rapidly. In agreeing on the American deployment, both the Americans and the Saudis had been convinced that it was essential to provide political reinsurance for the Saudi leaders by enlisting as many other Arab and Muslim governments as possible to join in the defense of Saudi Arabia. King Fahd subsequently invited "Arab, Muslim and friendly" states to contribute to the effort. Within a day, Egypt and Morocco responded to calls from the Saudi

leadership and from President Bush with promises of military deployments, joining the GCC states and the British, who had already begun a token air deployment, in a budding coalition effort.

The UN Security Council, also on August 6, passed Resolution 661 authorizing international sanctions against Iraq. With this step, the means for significant multilateral economic coercion against Iraq was added to the military leverage being prepared by individual states. Resolution 661 was passed with only Cuba and Yemen abstaining—the former out of principle and the latter out of its pro-Iraqi proclivities. The Soviet Union and China, disappointed in the lack of Iraqi flexibility, joined in approving the sanctions, partly harboring the hope that the threat of economic losses would rapidly oblige Saddam to yield. Resolution 661 noted Iraq's noncompliance with Resolution 660 and established a freeze on all trade and financial transactions with Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Only medical and humanitarian food shipments were exempted, while a committee of the Security Council was set up to monitor enforcement of the sanctions.

The sanctions were, for many members of the developing coalition, a two-edged sword. By cutting off trade with Iraq and Kuwait, many UN members lost export revenues, oil transit fees, or remittances from their nationals working in the two countries. The developed countries, and even the Soviet Union, which had an important economic relationship with Iraq, could absorb the losses, but among the developing countries, Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan were to be the most severely affected, while many other countries in South Asia and farther afield would lose substantially.

Rising oil prices would be negative for most economies. Indeed, the prospect of strict multilateral enforcement of

the sanctions meant that about four-million barrels per day of Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil output would be removed from the energy market, leading to an inevitable shortage-induced increase in prices. With memories of the dissension and controversy produced by the 1973 and 1979 oil shocks to guide them, the members of the coalition recognized the need to work together to dampen price rises and to alleviate the financial impact on key economies. A crucial element, initially, in reassuring the markets was Saudi Arabia's promise to increase its production to help replace the lost supplies. But the country's actual ability to produce on a "surge basis" was a major question mark, and prices began to rise gradually in anticipation of a coming shortage, even though both stocks and supplies in transit at sea were still substantial.

Iraq's Reaction

While some governments were hopeful that the rapid international response to Iraq's aggression—diplomatic isolation, condemnation, sanctions, and military deployments—would rapidly bring Saddam to terms, his reaction was quite the opposite. Having gained little from his miscalculated eight years of war against Iran, he apparently thought that his aspirations to Arab leadership, perhaps even his political future, could not survive a new loss of face from a failed Kuwaiti adventure. Nor was he yet ready to settle for a half-loaf through some form of negotiated withdrawal. Through his hard-line tactics with the various Arab mediators and in the Arab League, following that body's condemnation of the invasion, Saddam had alienated Egyptian and other key Arab leaders, making an Arab settlement virtually impossible in the days before the international reaction began to firm up. Once

the international community began to develop a coercive response, he reacted by raising the stakes.

Following the approval of sanctions and the beginning of military deployments to the area by coalition members, Iraq quickly (1) abandoned its pretext of having invaded Kuwait on behalf of a puppet regime by formally annexing Kuwait to Iraq; (2) froze the travel of Americans and other Westerners from Kuwait and Iraq, and later that of all foreigners—making them effective hostages; (3) declared a "holy war" against the infidel forces arriving in Saudi Arabia, launching an extensive propaganda campaign to discredit the Saudis, Kuwaitis, and their Western allies in Arab and Muslim eyes; and (4) continued a confrontational line in the Arab League, guaranteeing an acrimonious split when the summit finally took place on August 10. Divisions in the Arab world broadened from that point on, and Iraqi-inspired demonstrations began to break out in capitals either friendly to Iraq or neutral. While various Arab mediation efforts persisted throughout the crisis, they proved ineffective because they could not overcome the rifts among the principal Arab states.

Following the failure of Arab mediation, and with considerable experience in evading international sanctions behind them, the Iraqis appeared ready to absorb the international costs of their occupation of Kuwait, already compensated somewhat by their continuing pillage of Kuwait City. At the same time, they began an active diplomatic and propaganda campaign to split and discredit the developing and perhaps incongruously allied group of countries now opposing them.

4

Building Pressure

IRAQ'S STRATEGY OF SEEKING TO SPLIT THE COALITION WAS APPROpriate to its situation and to the disparate nature of the coalition—and it was not without its chances of success: for the nascent coalition had many internal inconsistencies and was, from the beginning, more a set of intertwined alliances than a single reality. Those nations that opposed Iraq's action did so from a variety of national motivations. A coalition member's condemnation of the aggression did not necessarily mean it shared the American determination to return to the status quo antebellum, for example, any more than it meant sharing the Soviet desire to find a face-saving compromise for Saddam, or Syria's desire to see him humiliated. Keeping the coalition together in the face of Iraq's effort to exploit those inconsistencies therefore involved, to a large degree, building up its momentum on specific agreed actions and striving to ignore the holes in the road.

American diplomacy provided a strong cohesive force to the coalition. The United States had taken the lead in the Security Council's actions and, supported chiefly by the British and Saudis, in the deployment of military forces to the area. The United States would also play key parts in most of the diplomatic mechanisms that would be created over the coming weeks to cope with the crisis.

The strategy of coercive diplomacy approved by the UN Security Council meant, in practice, that the United States needed to lead in building the political momentum: the Security Council members and other concerned parties would be urged to ratchet up the pressure on Iraq regularly, through passage of resolutions and the greater use of political, economic, or military leverage.

America's diplomacy in support of this strategy was strengthened by an exceptional unity of purpose shown within the Bush Administration and, at least initially, between the administration and Congress. The strategic objective of assuring Saudi Arabia's security and denying Iraq control of a majority of Persian Gulf oil was clear, while President Bush's evident determination to roll back the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was supported without the kind of interagency conflict that can all too often bedevil successful policy execution. Internal policy coordination also was particularly effective, thanks to consistent and collegial crisis management by the Deputies' Committee, which proved central to the process of keeping the various channels of U.S. and coalition diplomacy in step.

As the coalition effort expanded, the U.S. role in virtually all of the operational arenas became a key element of the international coordination. Crisis diplomacy, from mid-autumn on, was conducted through a broad array of channels: from bilateral contacts between heads of state and foreign ministers; through multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council, NATO, the OECD, the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe; to numerous direct military-to-military or intelligence channels and specially created bodies dealing with the sanctions regime or international financial support for affected countries. The com-

plexity of the diplomatic effort, involving a group of thirty-six contributing governments and virtually nonstop negotiation among the members of the Security Council, was as unprecedented as the mammoth military effort.

Deliberations in the United Nations

In the Security Council, Resolution 662 was passed in response to Iraq's announced annexation of Kuwait. Negotiated on the same day as Iraq's announcement and approved unanimously, it declared Iraq's action "null and void." Because of the particularly flagrant violation of international law posed by the attempted annexation, passage of this resolution did not require the kind of negotiation needed for more controversial subjects. Nevertheless, a pattern of negotiation was beginning to develop for the more complicated resolutions: starting with U.S.-British consultations, once sufficient common ground was established, the negotiators brought the French into the circle, and then consulted with the Soviets to gain their concurrence. After the four powers were in general agreement, they would consult with the Chinese in an effort to win their support or non-objection, and then negotiate a "big five" agreed draft that would be presented to the other ten, nonpermanent, countries on the council.

With the United States and Soviet Union in general agreement, the other members of the council could negotiate points of language, but had little chance to block resolutions, even had they wanted to. Only the Cubans and Yemenis consistently opposed coalition-supported drafts, while members such as Malaysia or Columbia, which occasionally held principled positions at variance with the majority, were able on occasion to influence the

final texts through the negotiation process.

The council's special committee to oversee enforcement of the sanctions was established on August 9 and immediately began its work of monitoring Iraqi trade. One of its first acts was to consider the questions raised by Iraqi oil shipments already on the high seas: Were they contraband? Could they be seized at sea? Under what authority? The United States, Britain, and France already had naval units in the area ready to enforce the sanctions, but there was no international agreement as to whether the previous council resolutions gave sufficient legal authority for such an act or even whether such strong measures were appropriate at such an early date. The Soviets and other states, who were being urged by the United States to join the quarantine, insisted that they could not without specific Security Council approval under Article 42 of the UN Charter—without which a blockade would amount to an act of war. Others, particularly the British, argued that action could be taken to assist Kuwait under Charter Article 51 on self-defense.

The United States did not take a position on the legal aspects of the issue, but was increasingly anxious that Iraqi oil shipments, apparently sent out as deliberate tests of the sanctions regime, not escape seizure and set a damaging precedent. With Iraqi "sanctions busting" tankers approaching potential ports of refuge and stimulating calls in the American press and Congress for military action, President Bush authorized military units on August 12 to interdict oil shipments. While in the end, the American military took no action against the suspect tankers (aside from firing a few warning shots), the threat of unilateral U.S. action disturbed many members of the coalition, who were either not convinced of the need for coercive mea-

sures or saw them as a belligerent act that could give Saddam a pretext to invade the still lightly defended Saudi Arabian oil area. Moreover, the threat of unilateral American action had put at risk the then-developing cooperative atmosphere in the coalition. The United States was criticized for its "cowboy" attitude, and for a short time, it was isolated within the Security Council until a resolution authorizing naval action was worked out.

The UN and its specialized agencies at the same time were obliged to become active on another front: that of the refugees who were beginning to flee Iraq by the tens of thousands as a result of Saddam's threats to hold all foreigners hostage. Following the earlier exodus of Kuwaitis and Westerners to Saudi Arabia, vastly larger numbers of Egyptians, Indians, Pakistanis, Asians, and others who had been working in Iraq and Kuwait began an exodus home, largely through Jordan. As the specialized agencies began to arrange for assistance to the soon-to-be-overwhelmed Jordanian authorities, the Security Council passed Resolution 664 on August 18, calling on Iraq to facilitate the departure of all detained foreign nationals. Iraq's response, once again, was to raise the ante. On the following day, Saddam announced that all foreigners were potential hostages in light of the "act of war" committed against Iraq by the naval quarantine. The exodus predictably swelled to a flood, but Saddam's effort to use hostages as leverage against the coalition backfired in the end.

Desert Shield Takes Shape

The American military deployment, named Desert Shield, was proceeding with breathtaking speed, but was, after two weeks, more of a political deterrent than a force ca-

pable of standing up to a concerted push from the heavily armed Iraqis just across the Kuwait-Saudi border. The Saudis had been active in efforts to enlist more Muslim governments to take part, but so far, only Pakistan had offered a token addition to the prompt GCC, Egyptian, and Moroccan promises of troops. Because of the symbolic importance in Arab circles that a Syrian contribution would display, the United States reinforced Saudi efforts in Damascus through a visit by the assistant secretary of State, obtaining a promise of help but still no commitment of troops. Of the non-Gulf states, only the British had been able to deploy troops to the potential front. A French helicopter contingent was caught up in an embarrassing debate about command authority, and wound up deploying temporarily to the Red Sea port of Yanbu, where it was placed under Saudi command.

While possibly deterring an Iraqi attack and certainly giving new confidence to the Saudis and their allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the international deployment was not without its immediate political costs. The Soviets were clearly uncomfortable with the massive American move to such a geostrategically important region and with the lack of consultation preceding the move, prompting a brief chill in the normally fruitful relationship between Secretary of State Baker and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. The Iranians likewise were unhappy over the possibility that the American military could exploit the crisis to establish a greatly reinforced, permanent presence in their neighborhood. At the same time, however, they were torn between the conflicting desires of wishing to see the United States humiliate the Iraqis, on the one hand, and of taking any advantages from Saddam's surprise peace overture of August 14, on the

other. In spite of Syrian and Saudi efforts to dissuade them, they began to discuss a normalization of relations with Iraq. Throughout the crisis, Iran played an ambivalent role, and its very real opposition to the deployment of Western troops to the Islamic heartland was, in practice, limited to occasional blasts of propaganda.

In Saudi Arabia, the issues of command structure and agreements on the status of the deploying forces, normally negotiated on a contingency basis in peacetime, were being dealt with urgently as the troops deployed. Yet, both issues could influence the political success or failure of the enterprise. Command authority, which went definitively unresolved for months, was partly clarified by the creation of a Saudi command that would serve as the basing and support authority for arriving Arab and Muslim forces, and units like the French who attached themselves voluntarily or for special purposes. From the outset, the British were attached to the American command, which operated in parallel and close liaison with the Saudis. While these initial command arrangements would be unsatisfactory for the long run, which would inevitably involve joint military planning, they provided enough ambiguity to satisfy everyone minimally. Most importantly, they facilitated a continued smooth deployment.

The very arrival of hundreds of thousands of American and other Western troops, however, created an even more urgent problem. The behavior of those troops in Saudi Arabia, with its intensely conservative and insular culture, carried an immense risk of incidents and friction among the major partners in the military coalition. Given the Iraqi propaganda against the deployment of non-Muslims to Saudi Arabia, any dissension within the coalition stemming from a clash of cultures could have been

poisonous. Luckily, General Schwarzkopf, the American commander, was sensitive to this aspect of coalition maintenance and, working with the U.S. embassy, took effective action to minimize the risks. Arriving American troops received crash courses in Saudi cultural norms and correct behavior; Schwarzkopf published strict rules designed to avoid points of potential conflict; and multitiered liaison arrangements were rapidly set up among Saudi authorities, the military, and American embassy personnel to handle local problems. Still, small incidents had an initial tendency to escalate under the intense scrutiny of all parties, including the international press.

Coalition units at sea were at this point largely limited to the American, British, and French in the absence of a UN resolution authorizing a concerted naval interdiction effort. Some nations were sending units in anticipation of a resolution, others waiting. The Soviets had sent ambiguous signals that they would join the effort if it received a UN mandate, but they had also raised activation of the UN Military Staff Committee as a precondition. In the end, they backed away from the proposal after obtaining one symbolic meeting of the long-moribund organization, perhaps out of concern that participation might require them to send military forces. The naval commanders in the area gradually developed their own system of coordination, which worked effectively throughout the crisis, even following the manyfold expansion of the flotilla.

The Sanctions Gain Teeth

The dispute within the Security Council on measures to enforce the sanctions was finally resolved on August 25 with the passage of Resolution 665, with only Cuba and

Yemen abstaining. The resolution authorized members to "use such measures . . . as may be necessary" to ensure compliance with the sanctions by ships in international commerce. While not explicitly declaring a legal state of blockade, the resolution had, by authorizing the stopping and searching of shipping, granted to member states an unprecedented discretion to use force in moving the sanctions enforcement onto the high seas. On passage of the resolution, several European countries (Italy, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands) immediately committed to send naval units to help in the interdiction effort, and the international naval force eventually comprised units from twenty-three nations. Other members, China and France included, had apparently supported the resolution partly from a desire to prevent the United States from taking unilateral action.

The Soviets, equally concerned about unilateral American action, nonetheless resisted passage of the resolution until the last moment as they explored an independent effort to de-escalate the crisis. Chairman Gorbachev tried to use the lever of the voting deadline to win a promise of withdrawal from Saddam, and even secured a several days' delay in the vote. But in the end he could not cause the Iraqi leader to show any flexibility. After the failure of this new effort at conciliation, the Soviets reluctantly joined the resolution, but withheld their hoped-for contribution to the international naval force.

Passage of the resolution proved, in the event, to be a useful test of the coalition's growing determination to obtain Iraqi compliance with the withdrawal demand. The Soviets and others could gain satisfaction that the resolution had set a principle that the international effort was to receive its authority and guidance from the Security

Council, while the United States was satisfied to have a broad delegation of authority. Resolution 665's passage thus marked a turning point in the coalition's diplomacy in New York, making possible the relatively speedy passage of a string of new resolutions either reinforcing coalition activities or objecting to Iraqi practices in Kuwait. Five resolutions were passed in September alone, two of which substantially tightened enforcement of the embargo. The pace of work in the Security Council's Sanctions Committee grew hectic over the coming months as the members worked together to identify suspected sanctions violations (most often using American intelligence information), supervise international enforcement, and devise countermeasures. As in other multilateral mechanisms developed by the coalition members, the committee's work eventually gave participants a stake in the coalition's goals, which was perhaps as important as the enforcement results actually achieved.

5

Coping with Differences

Passage of Resolution 665 enabled the coalition to move forward on the basis of an international mandate that provided for limited military measures to reinforce the economic pressure on Iraq. Rhetorically, the coalition's cause was presented as a case of the entire international community against Iraq. Nonetheless, the long debate had exposed a variety of differences among the members of the Security Council and with other coalition members not represented on the fifteen-member council. To be certain, coalition members were united in the goal of obtaining Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and in the hope that sanctions would bring enough pressure on trade-dependent Iraq to oblige its compliance. Beyond that, they had significant differences on crisis strategy and, more fundamentally, on regional politics and perceptions of Iraq's future role.

The basic debate on Resolution 665 had been over the means to resolve the confrontation—specifically, the extent to which coercion might be necessary to bring about Iraqi compliance. At one end of the spectrum within the coalition were those who preferred a gradual, supple approach toward sanctions enforcement or military pressure. They pointed out, with some justification, that Iraqi diplomacy tended to harden in the face of threats, rather

than become more flexible. Many of the governments with citizens held hostage in Iraq or Kuwait, moreover, were concerned about Iraqi reactions to threats or actual use of force by the coalition, and as time went on, they were exposed to considerable pressure from relatives and other domestic interest groups to follow a conciliatory line toward the Iraqis. At the other end of the spectrum were a few governments—led by Great Britain and supported increasingly by the United States and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council—which argued that there should be no compromise that allowed the Iraqis to profit from their aggression. These governments were determined to steadily increase the pressure, including military, to oblige unconditional Iraqi compliance with the UN resolutions passed to date.

While Resolution 665 gave the coalition's hawks authority to increase the pressure on Iraq, it did not resolve differences over long-term strategy. In practice, the lack of an agreed strategy had been helpful in bringing the coalition together. Ambiguity permitted each member to justify its participation in its own terms for its own domestic audience, and even to explore several policy paths simultaneously. Because the coalition remained largely an ad hoc arrangement—or rather an interlocking set of arrangements among its members—there was no obligation for its members to engage in what could well have been a divisive internal debate over the formulation of a common policy. Decisions on common measures were taken incrementally and in response to specific circumstances, but with very different motivations and strategic views. Differences were dealt with, not resolved.

This ambiguity on a common strategy toward Iraq or on a regional policy was risky to the coalition over the

long run. It allowed a dangerous degree of freedom of diplomatic maneuver to individual members, led to unclear objectives, and left the door open to splitting tactics by the Iraqis. Given the differences among the coalition members on basic policies, however, it is doubtful that any group effort to produce more clarity would have been productive, because it was more likely to expose weaknesses. Indeed, the experience of the European Community members, who were obligated to consult on formulation of common policy, but who were in the end unable to agree, was a sobering reminder of the coalition's strategic limitations.

The lack of an agreed strategy, however, made coalition maintenance a highly time-consuming preoccupation of American diplomacy, and it contributed to concern that the coalition might not hold together over a protracted period of economic and political warfare. On the other hand, the situation also allowed the leaders of the coalition—those with the most at stake, especially the United States and Saudi Arabia—to interpret the language of the UN resolutions in the light of their own requirements, as long as they could ensure acquiescence by the other members of the coalition.

The Coalition and Israel

By mid-August, Iraqi diplomacy had selected the Middle East peace deadlock as the ground of its counterattack against the coalition's early efforts to isolate it. Its strategic aim was simple—to split the coalition by linking continued Israeli occupation of territories occupied during the 1967 Six-Day War with its own occupation of Kuwait. The ground was indeed carefully chosen: policy differences

among coalition members in this area were probably greater than on any other point. Saddam set the stage for a concerted Iraqi effort to drive this wedge in an August 12 speech in which he promised withdrawal—but only after Israel agreed to withdraw from the occupied territories. While the proposal was quickly and summarily rejected in Washington and elsewhere, it was clearly not going to go away.

Iraqi diplomacy had, before the invasion of Kuwait, succeeded in gaining a large degree of support in the Arab and Muslim world for an aggressive stance toward Israel, and Iraq was still viewed as the champion of the Arabs, even in countries whose governments had sided with the coalition. The Iraqis expected, with good reason, that continuation of a militant policy toward Israel could undermine, or sow dissension, among the major members the coalition. By a policy of linking resolution of their occupation to resolution of the long-festering issue of Israeli occupation, the Iraqis saw many opportunities to create trouble.

In the Arab and Muslim world, this could capitalize on widespread resentment against the West, Israel, and the conservative Arab governments that were supporting Kuwait's ruling family; it could perhaps even undermine some Arab or Muslim members of the coalition by raising their populations against them or by causing them to distance themselves from Israel and the United States. It could split the Soviet-American common front by reviving the traditional Soviet posture of support for Arab "rejectionists" against U.S. support for Israel. It could cause disagreement between the Americans and the Western Europeans and Japanese, who did not see eye to eye on Middle East policy with the United States at the best

of times. At a minimum, it could put the United States on the defensive by obliging it to protect Israeli interests at the expense of prosecuting its case against the Iraqi occupation. Iraq had indeed thrown its spear at the Achille's heel of the coalition, and much of coalition diplomacy from that point on was directed toward minimizing damage from Iraq's policy of linkage.

While refusing to accept direct linkage, coalition members nonetheless accepted its reality over time. That is, while refusing to accept linkage as a condition of an Iraqi withdrawal, American and other officials began gradually to talk of addressing the Middle East deadlock—but only in the aftermath of an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal and resolution of the crisis. The objective was to show a readiness to move forward on an issue of considerable interest to many coalition members without, at the same time, allowing Saddam to gain credit for forcing the move. It was a delicate trick, and it depended to some degree on the readiness of the coalition's members to go along. France's President Mitterrand appeared momentarily to have overstepped the line when he seemed to link, in a late September UN General Assembly speech, Iraqi withdrawal to the holding of a new Middle East peace conference. The distinction between his position and those of President Bush or British Foreign Minister Hurd, who promised at the same podium that withdrawal from Kuwait would "pave the way" for a conference, indicates the fineness of the line then being walked. The issue was highly sensitive and caused much friction in the UN and among capitals over the coming weeks as diplomatic activity and conciliation efforts accelerated.

Israel, though obviously an interested party and threatened by Iraqi missiles as well as by the possibility of an

Iraqi move into Jordan, was not invited to join the coalition. The need to enlist the cooperation of the largest number of Arab and Islamic governments, including such strong opponents of Israel as Syria or Iran, militated against inclusion of the Likud government. This became particularly important once Iraq began to link its withdrawal with movement toward a Middle East peace conference aimed at securing Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The Americans consequently sought to minimize any appearance of U.S.-Israeli cooperation, much to the chagrin of the Israeli government, which wanted closer coordination.

The other coalition members were satisfied to leave coordination between Israeli defense needs and coalition strategy to the U.S.-Israeli channel, even though that bilateral relationship was not close at the outbreak of the crisis and became even more guarded during the period. Secretary of State Baker's many trips to the area during the crisis pointedly did not include stops in Tel Aviv, although high-level contacts had taken place in defense channels as early as mid-August. By the end of that month, the United States promised to supply Israel with $1 billion in defensive arms to strengthen it against possible Iraqi missile attacks, but the risk of an Iraqi attack, and the possible reaction of the coalition's Arab members to a subsequent Israeli retaliation, remained a major weakness in the coalition's common front.

The Soviets Waffle

The credibility of the coalition depended to a substantial degree on continued Soviet-American cooperation. Indeed, after decades of profound differences over Middle

East policy that had precluded joint UN action, the two countries' joint statement, issued immediately after the Iraqi invasion, was essential to the international effort by showing a common Soviet-American front toward Iraq. The joint statement also helped assure the moderate Arabs that the Soviet Union would not take Iraq's side in the widening inter-Arab split. Within days of the statement, however, Soviet behavior became more ambiguous as Gorbachev tried to deal with strongly conflicting interests inside his government. On one side were the "new thinkers" who had, over the past few years, increased Soviet cooperation with the West in order to diminish the Soviet Union's international isolation and to allow it to play a positive role in developing new post–Cold War security relationships. They accepted the need for an international-coalition approach to counter the Iraqi aggression, along with the requirement to apply the sanctions which that implied.

On the other side were the military and bureaucratic interests that had developed a stake in the Soviet Union's long-standing economic and military cooperation with Iraq. The Soviet Union, in their eyes, should neither take a back seat to the United States in a Middle East crisis nor take sanctions against an old ally—particularly one which owed the Soviet Union huge debts and employed over 7,800 Soviet technicians. Their strongest argument against Soviet acquiescence in a muscular coalition effort, however, was one that resonated even with the new thinkers—namely, that allowing the United States and the Western powers to build up a substantial military presence in the Gulf would be detrimental to Soviet strategic interests. In the final analysis, though, the Soviet Union's pressing economic crisis and great need of outside cred-

its eclipsed this argument between factions and dictated that priority be given to maintaining good relationships with the United States and Western financial circles. The Soviet Union thus remained a key member of the coalition, but its internal political contradictions translated into inconsistent policy implementation. Particular attention by senior American policymakers and other coalition partners was necessary throughout the crisis to keep Soviet diplomacy generally in line with the coalition's and its frequent negotiating initiatives from undercutting the common effort.

Soviet efforts to find a compromise solution were motivated by a number of factors: Gorbachev, facing a disastrous economic collapse and in growing trouble domestically, was eager to produce a foreign policy success that would demonstrate the Soviet Union's continued global power status and symbolize economic independence from the West. At a minimum, the Soviet leadership wanted to keep the coalition's efforts subject to UN decisionmaking, which would both give them a degree of negotiating leverage over the coalition's terms of reference and help constrain American unilateralism in the Gulf. In addition, major factions in the Soviet military and foreign policy bureaucracies wanted to promote solutions to the crisis that would save Saddam from loss of face or—as hostilities became a possibility and then a reality—from a defeat that could showcase Soviet military training and equipment in a poor light. Personal and policy rivalries also played a role in Soviet diplomatic activism: for example, in helping to motivate the efforts of Soviet special negotiator Primakov to broker a deal that could undercut his rival Shevardnadze. Finally, helping Iraq extricate itself from its situation in a way which, they

hoped, could make possible repayment of its huge debts was appealing to Soviet policymakers coping with their country's growing economic disaster.

Soviet bilateral diplomacy with Iraq remained active throughout the crisis period. In August and early September, they hosted senior Iraqi emissaries and tried to slow down UN Security Council action on both sanctions resolutions (661 and 665), pending the results of their negotiations with Baghdad. While the Soviet leaders described their efforts as designed to obtain an Iraqi commitment of withdrawal, suspicion began to emerge in Washington and elsewhere that they were simply buying time for Saddam when the Iraqis were consolidating their hold on and pillage of Kuwait.

The ambiguities of Soviet diplomacy became sufficiently disturbing in Washington to prompt President Bush to invite Chairman Gorbachev to a summit, eventually held in Helsinki in the second week of September. There, Gorbachev, fresh from an apparently unsatisfactory round of talks with Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz, initially urged the Americans to agree to some sort of linkage in order to facilitate a settlement. The Americans, in turn, urged the Soviets to participate in the embargo enforcement and to pull their advisers out of Iraq. No agreement was reached on these points, but some common understandings began to emerge. The Americans sought to reassure the Soviet leaders that following a successful resolution of the crisis, the United States would work together with the Soviet Union on Middle East peace and withdraw its forces from the Persian Gulf area. In the meantime, they were ready to help the Soviets reestablish diplomatic relations with the Saudis and obtain Saudi financial assistance. A joint communique issued at the end

of the talks was silent on the issue of a Middle East peace conference, but did commit the two sides—in admittedly ambiguous language—to review "additional steps consistent with the UN Charter" if sanctions failed. While the summit's results were not clear-cut, the high-level consultations and communique language showed that the United States and the Soviet Union would continue to work together to obtain Iraqi withdrawal. It did not, however, put an end to unilateral Soviet efforts to broker a settlement, which tended to peak whenever the other members of the coalition sought to increase the pressure on Iraq.

6

Widening Support

While the Soviet Union represented a key vote in the UN Security Council and was an indispensable strategic ally, it was neither the only member of the coalition that had its own diplomatic interests to protect nor the only one that had reservations about the American push for strong measures.

France, with its tradition of assertive diplomatic independence in the Middle East and substantial economic ties to Iraq, was nonetheless a strong supporter of the initial UN resolutions. A good rapport between Presidents Bush and Mitterrand helped overcome some French hesitations, particularly about the coverage of the sanctions. An initially halfhearted French cooperation with the deployments and contribution to the military coalition, shaped in part by the unreconstructed Gaullism of then-Defense Minister Chevenement, was also overcome. The French military became active members of the force, eventually contributing over 15,000 personnel and valuable facilities for the international deployments. As contingency war plans began to be drawn up, moreover, the French military pushed successfully (both in Paris and Riyadh) for a greater role than the one assigned to it as part of the Saudi military command; it was eventually attached to and fought under American direction. French diplomacy in

New York was also generally supportive, out of concern that international law and the role of the Security Council be respected.

But French diplomatic tradition, its relationship with Iraq, and its public opinion also pushed President Mitterrand toward developing an identifiably French role in settling the crisis. His September speech before the UN General Assembly, for example, gave notice that French views on linkage to a Middle East settlement were not necessarily tied to Washington's. The French also showed their traditional independence in the European bodies then discussing crisis management measures, and they continued to keep in sympathetic contact with the PLO and other Arab personalities trying to find a compromise settlement throughout the period. While these steps helped France maintain its freedom of maneuver, President Bush's frequent contacts with President Mitterrand were probably the major factor in keeping limits on actual French unilateralism. Only in the last days before the war did the French launch an independent effort for a Security Council resolution that would have directly linked Iraqi withdrawal to a Middle East Peace conference; the effort failed in the end for lack of time as well as any convincing Iraqi contribution to the French effort.

The People's Republic of China (PRC), the permanent member of the Security Council that was most likely to have broken the common front among the major powers by an abstention or even a veto, joined the initial resolution of condemnation without demur. Moreover, despite important Chinese arms sales and development projects in Iraq, as well as some sympathy for Iraq's argument that it was seeking reunification with a "lost province," the Chinese also joined in the trade embargo and were effec-

tive in enforcing the sanctions. The Chinese regime—isolated as it had been internationally since the Tiananmen Square repression—in fact looked upon the crisis as an opportunity to gain rehabilitation in the world's councils by trading its votes in the United Nations.

In view of traditional Chinese support for Third World causes against the European great powers, material Chinese help in the coalition effort was neither requested nor expected. As the UN resolutions became more rigorous and more intrusive, however, Chinese reservations about the role of the international community in forcing compliance or interfering in the internal affairs of UN members became more pronounced, and the efforts to keep it from breaking ranks more costly. In the end, the price paid by American diplomacy for China's continued support of the UN resolutions was agreement to renew high-level Sino-American contacts in return for an abstention on the late November resolution authorizing the use of force.

Of the other members of the Security Council, Cuba and Yemen, for their separate reasons, continued to resist expansion of the coalition's mandate, although they often joined the majority on resolutions aimed at reinforcing international legality, such as the ones denouncing Iraq's actions against Kuwaiti sovereignty. Some members of the council's majority, such as Canada and Finland, were active supporters of the coalition and even contributed to the military effort. Only Malaysia, with its Muslim population and strong feelings about the Arab-Israeli issue, showed serious reluctance to go along with the increasing severity of the resolutions. The other members, in general, went along with the majority—either readily or as a result of the persuasive argumentation of the U.S. and U.K. missions. American diplomacy at the United Na-

tions, moreover, was usually reinforced by bilateral démarches and occasional interventions by President Bush or Secretary of State Baker.

Trying to Secure the Flanks: Iraq's Neighbors

The coalition needed regional allies. Turkey, because of its important strategic location and the passage of Iraq's major oil export pipelines across its territory, was a key coalition recruit from the beginning. President Bush talked to President Ozal on the first day of the crisis and obtained his agreement to cooperate with the coalition effort. Ozal, for his part, saw a chance to use cooperation with the coalition as a way to gain a greater Turkish role in NATO, or even its desired integration into the EC. Nor was he slow to point out that closing the pipelines and cutting off trade with Iraq would be costly for Turkey. Indeed, Ozal needed to obtain tangible benefits from bringing Turkey into the coalition to show his opponents inside his government, several of whom later resigned in protest, and to the public at large, which did not favor action against fellow Muslims. In response to Turkey's political and economic needs, Secretary Baker paid an early visit to Ankara and by early August had already promised that the United States would help to find replacement aid for the country's lost pipeline and trade revenues. He also assured the Turks that they would have NATO protection in the event of Iraqi aggression. In return, Ozal continued to push cooperation with the coalition and eventually moved one-hundred thousand Turkish troops to the Iraqi border, granted coalition members use of Turkish facilities, and allowed air strikes from Turkish soil. Turkey was compensated by increased inte-

gration into NATO, deployment of NATO air-defense assets, substantial financial aid as one of the "front line" states, and even an improvement in its American textile quotas as a tool to help it earn its own way.

Egypt, reacting negatively to a perceived Iraqi breach of faith in attacking Kuwait after private statements to the contrary, lined up with the coalition from the start. Its cooperation became wholehearted once Arab efforts to find a compromise solution had failed. Egypt deployed the largest Arab force to the front, and in return, succeeded in obtaining substantial financial support to compensate it for the costs incurred.

Syria needed no urging to oppose Iraq—the two regimes had been rivals for decades, and a permanent Iraqi victory over Kuwait would have been very damaging to Syrian interests. In an important gesture of support, Syria sent token military units to Saudi Arabia by mid-August. But large-scale or active participation in a coalition headed by the United States—and tacitly supported by Israel—was much more difficult for Damascus. The coalition members, however, wanted Syria to play a visible role, largely because of the credibility that participation by this strongly Arab nationalist regime would give the effort in the Arab world. Both the Saudis and Americans sought a Syrian contribution as a matter of priority. Capitalizing on Syria's desire to reduce its post–Cold War isolation, State Department Assistant Secretary Kelly traveled to Damascus twice in August to urge Syrian cooperation. Saudi promises of financial assistance backed Kelly's effort and resulted in a Syrian promise to send a small military detachment.

The allies continued to seek a more visible Syrian contribution and assurances that they would participate in

the coalition effort even if Saddam opened hostilities against Israel. The turning point was reached during a visit to Damascus by Secretary of State Baker on September 13, following which the Syrians both tripled their troop commitment to the coalition and received the Sheikh of Kuwait in an important public demonstration of support. Syria also helped the coalition indirectly through efforts to slow down Iran's acceptance of Baghdad's attempts at reconciliation. Syria's political contribution was sufficiently positive to prompt consideration of a long-term Syrian role in post–crisis Gulf security architecture, but the Syrian contribution to the military effort, while it eventually reached 13,000 troops, remained more important symbolically than strategically. Syrian reluctance to send troops into Iraq (as opposed to liberating Kuwait), questions about Syrian reactions to Israeli involvement in any fighting, and the unfortunate similarity of Syrian equipment to Iraq's all combined to assure that the Syrian military forces were given only a limited role in the coalition's military planning and operations. Their service on the front, as part of the Saudi command, was nonetheless an invaluable signal that the coalition effort had support beyond that of the Western powers.

Iran's role remained ambivalent throughout the crisis. After eight years of bloody war against Saddam, the Iranians, like the Syrians, wanted no settlement that would strengthen Iraq and welcomed its possible defeat. Iranian diplomats informed the coalition members that their government would honor the international sanctions, and although there was considerable smuggling through Iranian territory during the period, its level was not so much higher than normal as to undercut the sanctions regime in any major way. (Nor is there any convincing evidence

that the Iranian authorities promoted movement of clandestine Iraqi oil exports though Iranian channels, as was occasionally reported.) On the other hand, the Iranians saw the massive deployment of American and other forces to the Persian Gulf as a direct threat to their long-term strategic interests, in spite of American statements that the troops would be withdrawn at the end of the crisis.

Iraq's mid-August offer to end the state of war and normalize relations with Tehran, on terms that amounted to an Iraqi defeat, was too good to pass up. Under these circumstances, the Iranians, not surprisingly, sought to have their cake and to eat it too. While doing nothing that would seriously hinder or threaten the coalition buildup and diplomatic effort, they simultaneously and gradually normalized relations with Baghdad, allowed some smuggling to bypass the sanctions, and made occasional statements opposing the presence of infidel troops on Muslim holy soil. On the eve of the war, Iran announced its neutrality; it later impounded and eventually confiscated more than 120 Iraqi military aircraft that fled to Iran during the hostilities. For the members of the coalition, Iran's position was annoying but, realistically, about as good as could be expected.

Jordan's failure to join the coalition effort, or to even stop undercutting it, was a major disappointment for American diplomacy. President Bush's good personal rapport with King Hussein and a history of Jordanian moderation on Arab-Israeli issues were insufficient to change the King's calculation that his country's interests were best served by neutrality and a promotion of compromise solutions that were, in effect, pro-Iraqi. During a mid-August trip to the United States, the King tried unsuccessfully to convince President Bush that a compro-

mise solution was necessary, and even though he received no encouragement, he continued his efforts throughout the crisis. The Arab members of the coalition, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia, were even more negative toward King Hussein's mediation efforts. With Jordan's heavy economic dependence on Iraqi trade and oil supplies, the country's record in enforcing the international sanctions was weak to say the least, although the King had promised that his authorities would honor the UN embargo.

The result of Jordan's noncooperation created, for the members of the coalition, a necessity to create offshore sanctions enforcement mechanisms (such as the naval interdiction effort and aspects of the air embargo), which supplanted Jordanian enforcement. It also obliged the military planners to take into account the possibility of Iraqi use of Jordanian territory or airspace against Israel during hostilities. Ironically, while the coalition members had to plan politically and militarily around Jordan, they continued to include Jordan among the "front line" countries eligible for international aid. There was real concern that a worsening of the country's poor economic position would only have driven it more into the Iraqi camp. Finally, there was also concern that the Jordanian regime could not survive if it were caught in the middle of hostilities between Iraq and Israel. Jordan's unique situation, in short, required that it be given special treatment in spite of its unhelpful stance.

7

Holding It Together

By early October, the coalition had developed several distinct levels of cooperation, coordinated largely through active American diplomacy. The first level was conducted at the United Nations, where the Security Council continued to play an active role in articulating the coalition's agreed policies. A second level was focused on the practical aspects of expediting the vast flow of troops and materiel destined for the defense of Saudi Arabia. At a third level, in which the Saudis played the key role, the Arab and Muslim members of the coalition were enlisted and their contributions deployed. And at a fourth level—the one which arguably made the others functional—coordinated measures were being developed to minimize the economic impact of the crisis, pay for the deployments, and share the burden.

In the UN, the Security Council had passed a string of resolutions that condemned the increasingly brutal Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and tightened the sanctions regime. Iraq's continued inflexibility on withdrawal, and the inadmissibility under international law of many of its actions as an occupying power, had solidified a majority that even Yemen, Baghdad's usual apologist, and Cuba found necessary to join on occasion. Nonetheless, a sense of concern had begun to emerge that Iraq might successfully

scoff at the numerous Security Council resolutions. The fear grew that Iraq might be on the way to stamping out the last vestiges of the Kuwaiti state, while the Security Council had almost exhausted the methods of peaceful coercion available to it.

The sanctions regime, which was being enforced with increasing effectiveness by individual states, and supported by the effective sharing of intelligence and a growing multilateral naval interdiction effort, had not yet caused any softening in Iraqi behavior. It appeared instead that any costs associated with the sanctions were being shifted to the average Iraqi, rather than being borne by the regime or the Iraqi military. Indeed, the regime's control of the contraband trade indicated that it might actually be profiting from the shortages that had begun to develop. Thus, while the coalition members continued to hope that the sanctions might in time bring about Iraqi withdrawal, it was increasingly clear that the hopes for early Iraqi concessions under the pressure of trade sanctions were very optimistic. Sanctions alone, it appeared, would take a long time to bring meaningful pressure on a government as unwilling to make serious concessions as the Iraqi regime.

The buildup of coalition military forces in Saudi Arabia, and increasingly in the neighboring states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, provided an additional source of pressure on Iraq, even though the force's declared mission remained purely defensive. The vast deployment required intense international cooperation, which was coordinated through diplomatic as well as military-to-military channels. The American buildup was proceeding apace, with the last Desert Shield units scheduled to join the force expected in late October, after which the deployment pipeline would run dry. The American, British, and

French deployments were being increasingly supported by other NATO members, whose force contributions and logistical and facilities support were important materially as well as politically as a demonstration of the coalition's broad scope. Occasionally, the inclusion of units was dictated more by a political desire to show wide support than by military utility, requiring the military commanders to hurriedly develop roles for contingents that arrived all but unexpectedly. The command's ability to absorb, coordinate, and plan for combined actions was nevertheless steadily growing.

Similarly, the Saudi command was successfully incorporating units from a broad variety of new countries: it would eventually include military units from twenty-five countries, including the Arab allies, Senegal, Niger, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, as well as support units from a number of East and West European countries. Equally important, coordination between the two allied commands—American and Saudi—continued to be good, leading to few incidents or frictions of a kind that could have strained coalition harmony.

Thanks to the success of this huge and rapid deployment, the military situation had stabilized. In view of the array of increasingly effective forces ranged against them, by late October the Iraqis could no longer contemplate a successful invasion of Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, the coalition did not yet have enough force in place either to create a change in the situation or to oblige an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait. A stalemate was foreseeable, which was more likely to test the coalition's staying power than Iraq's; the latter had the advantages of a single command, internal lines of resupply, and a decade-plus history of mobilization. A protracted stalemate was likely to validate

Iraq's continued hold on Kuwait.

The third level of international cooperation involved building the Arab-Muslim component of the coalition. Here, Saudi diplomacy, and Saudi as well as Kuwaiti and other Gulf state money, had successfully expanded the array of Muslim and Arab forces committed to defend the country against potential Iraqi aggression. As in the group of European and Asian coalition members, however, there was no uniformity of political goals. The degree of support of some contingents in the Saudi-commanded force was, in fact, open to doubt, and not all were assigned frontline positions by the military planning that was then underway. The Saudis also had yet to register any important successes in countering the propaganda that the Iraqis had unleashed against them. A conference of the Muslim World League had been held in Saudi Arabia in September, but it had only been a mixed success in enlisting popular Muslim world or religious support. Hammering at its themes of Western interventionism in Arab and Muslim affairs, alleged profanation of the holy places, and insistence that the crisis could be resolved only as part of a greater Middle East settlement, Iraqi propaganda hit with great resonance and kept the coalition on the defensive in the Muslim world.

Mutual Assistance: The Glue of the Coalition

The coalition effort was expensive, and a major international effort was necessary to spread the costs as equitably as possible. The potentially serious economic consequences of the cutoff of Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil, the outflow of expatriate workers from the region, and the direct costs of the sanctions regime were obvious early in

the crisis. As the deployment of coalition troops to Saudi Arabia grew throughout September, the potential budgetary costs to participating members also began to be troublesome in building the coalition. Fortunately, both the Kuwaitis and the Saudis were in a position to pay and conscious of their responsibilities. The Japanese and Germans, who stood to gain from the international effort yet could not, for their own constitutional reasons, participate in the military effort, also provided important nonmilitary assistance. The deep pockets of these major donors made the coalition both economically and politically feasible for many participating governments.

If money was important in building the coalition, a broad international effort to share the burden was also useful for increasing the members' solidarity. By allowing affected countries to state their needs, and by ensuring some parity between donors' contributions, the effort demonstrated a spirit of burdensharing, blunting domestic opposition to participation in the coalition. In response to the expressed needs of allies such as Turkey, as well as U.S. congressional concerns over the costs of military deployment, the secretaries of Treasury and State began a broad international effort in early September to coordinate the international financial support for the coalition effort, which continued right up to the start of hostilities.

One of the first priorities for American diplomacy was to obtain assistance for the three frontline states that were most affected by the cutoff of Iraqi trade: Turkey, Jordan, and Egypt. The United States took the lead in organizing an international response, which ultimately helped all three to weather the crisis and also made possible Egypt's and Turkey's contribution to the military effort. Although the effort began with bilateral contacts, it was

multilateralized in late September through formation of the Gulf Crisis Financial Coordination Group. This group, which comprised representatives from twenty-six donor countries, the European Commission, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, met a number of times in a successful effort to mobilize new contributions and to coordinate individual country efforts. The group succeeded in raising over $16 billion in bilateral commitments, out of which almost $12 billion went to the frontline states. The multilateral nature of the effort allowed the group to address potential recipients' needs in an apolitical atmosphere; it assured, for example, support to Jordan even through the Gulf Arabs—by far the biggest donors to the overall effort—did not themselves offer any aid to Amman. The Financial Coordination Group, however, did not account for all economic aid provided to the frontline and other affected states. The United States, for example, forgave $7 billion in debt owed by Egypt, which is not counted in the above figures, while the Saudi offer of over $5 billion in loans to the Soviet Union, an important factor in the history of the coalition, is also not included. There also were other bilateral payments that were not publicly announced, generally from Saudi Arabia or Kuwait to Arab partners such as Syria.

Even more costly to the donors, however, were their contributions in kind, or through host-nation support, to help cover the costs of the military deployment. The Saudis had agreed, in inviting the American deployment, to pay all in-country costs of maintaining the troops in Saudi Arabia; by late September, these had risen to approximately $1 billion per month. The Saudis had also agreed to pay the costs of the actual deployment of other coalition forces, such as Egypt's. As part of Secretary Baker's

September "tin cup" trip to the coalition capitals, during which he mobilized and coordinated contributions, he obtained the agreement of the Government of Kuwait in exile to match the Saudi contributions. The Japanese and the Germans were also urged, because of their constitutional limitations on participating in a nondefensive military deployment, to pay support costs instead; both contributed in kind through such means as transportation and equipment supply. The sums involved were huge: the United States, for example, received over $54 billion in financial support from its coalition partners to help cover its estimated $60 billion in military costs. Of this, $16 billion each was contributed by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, $9 billion by Japan, $4.5 billion by the United Arab Emirates, and $2 billion by Germany. Each of these donors contributed, in different ways, to other nations, such as Turkey, Egypt, or even Israel, that deployed troops or otherwise supported the general coalition effort.

Another important aspect of mutual cooperation within the coalition was a concerted effort to mute the effects of oil price rises. The diplomacy of this effort was largely conducted within the International Energy Agency and was aimed at obtaining and openly providing as much information as possible about oil market conditions to minimize panic-based price rises. Sharing of information on stock levels and potential emergency demand restraint measures also helped calm the market. With this increased market transparency, and as new supplies became available, oil prices rose only gradually and peaked at a price near $40 per barrel in October—about double the pre-crisis price, but still not enough to create a market crisis that could shake the coalition. As hostilities approached in late December, the members of the IEA

were even joined by France—a first in the history of that organization—in planning steps to help counteract a new supply disruption.

Cooperation on terrorism was the final aspect of diplomatic collaboration that helped strengthen the coalition. In the face of Iraq's known capability for such action, coalition members and other interested governments entered into a period of heightened cooperation in identifying and neutralizing potential threats. Intelligence sharing was increased, including between such unlikely partners as the United States and Syria, and over 750 threats to coalition life or property were eventually reported. Most of these turned out to be minor, false, or uncoordinated, but in the sometimes prolonged process of working together on this matter, the coalition governments often developed routines that served to reinforce their sense of common commitment.

Iraq Probes for Weaknesses

Iraq's reaction to the coalition's coercive acts continued to be unbending. Neither the Soviets nor the UN Secretary General, in their late August–early September meetings with Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz, induced any meaningful indication of Iraqi flexibility; there had been no important contacts since. Iraq's reaction to the sanctions and the coalition's show of force had been, rather, to pursue its pillage of Kuwait, threaten to invade Saudi Arabia if the sanctions "strangled" Iraq's economy, and to manipulate the situation of the hostages (although Saddam had allowed approximately seven hundred women and children hostages to leave at the beginning of September). Saddam apparently calculated that his regime was suffi-

ciently resilient to either evade or weather the sanctions and that the coalition would not attack. While he had lost the initiative to the coalition, he was unwilling to give up his lucrative seizure of Kuwait and was not yet threatened seriously by the coalition's actions. To the contrary, rising oil prices, the cost of sanctions and military deployments, as well as concern about the fate of the hostages, were all creating a climate of uncertainty within the coalition countries, which Saddam believed he could exploit to weaken the coalition's resolve.

Iraqi propaganda, including its insincere claims to be defending Islam and fabrications about Israeli collusion with the coalition, was gaining some headway in the Arab world. Pro-Iraqi demonstrations—some Iraqi incited, some spontaneous—had taken place in many Arab and Muslim capitals; pro-Western Tunisia had climbed onto the fence and King Hassan of Morocco had cut back his participation in the coalition in response to popular sympathy for Iraq.

American leadership of the coalition also provided the Iraqis with a propaganda weapon that they skillfully employed. America's position as the only remaining superpower placed its leadership and motivations under intense scrutiny as the crisis unfolded. It was not difficult for Iraqi propaganda to instill doubt in France, the Soviet Union, and other coalition countries about American motives for sending troops to the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. American impatience, and its evident preference for coercion over conciliation (coupled with an increasing tendency to demonize the Iraqi leadership), also caused anxieties in coalition capitals on which Iraqi propaganda was not slow to capitalize. In particular, America's political vulnerability in many coalition capitals as Israel's

prime supporter gave the Iraqis opportunities to sow dissension in the coalition. Iraq, in Saddam's apparent calculation, did not have to defeat the coalition; it only had to exploit its weaknesses in a way that would render it incapable of decisive, concerted action.

A Time of Testing

The cohesiveness of the fledgling coalition was severely tested in October. Concern over the fate of their nationals held hostage in Iraq and Kuwait prompted several governments to initiate tentative contacts with Baghdad that risked compromising coalition solidarity. At the same time, momentous domestic or regional developments, such as the reunification of Germany and the Soviet Union's drift to the right after the defeat of Gorbachev's economic reform plan, were distracting key Western members of the coalition. Oil prices were still rising at the beginning of the month, causing concern about the cost of a protracted stalemate. The key challenge, however, came from the policy area in which the coalition members shared the least common ground—their attitudes toward Israel and those proposals for a Middle East peace conference that would link Israeli concessions to Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

An incident in Jerusalem provided the spark that inflamed the situation. On October 8, a Palestinian demonstration at the Holy Places was put down by the Israelis with excessive use of force, resulting in the death of twenty-two Arabs. Already agitated by the Gulf Crisis and the flow of Iraqi propaganda, Muslim world anger quickly crystallized behind a draft Security Council resolution that demanded condemnation of Israel and an in-

vestigation designed to recommend sanctions. The resolution, proposed by the PLO and backed by several council members, such as Malaysia, that had been supporting the coalition, seemed intended to prompt a U.S. veto and thereby drive a deep wedge between key members of the coalition—particularly between the United States and its Arab allies. For several days, the resolution's chances of passage looked good. Extraordinary efforts of American diplomacy, however, helped by a compromise British draft resolution and a key phone call between Presidents Bush and Mitterrand to nail down a crucial vote, culminated on October 12 in the passage of a resolution acceptable to the United States.

While condemning Israel, the resolution had weak follow-on provisions and did not call for a Middle East peace conference—which would have diverted attention away from the Kuwait issue. A companion Security Council resolution on the Middle East was put forward instead. Although that resolution was successfully set aside by American action, the concept of linking the Gulf Crisis with the Middle East deadlock nevertheless persisted in the Security Council. Draft resolutions to that effect, pushed by the delegations of Yemen, Cuba, Malaysia, and Colombia, were tabled whenever Israel's relations with its neighbors heated up, but three months of very adept American diplomacy kept this issue from coming to the floor in a way that could have undermined the coalition.

While the immediate crisis in the UN was thus contained, the coalition's fragility in the face of external crises, and the vulnerability of its American leadership on the Middle East issue, were exposed. From that time forward, impatience for an early resolution of the crisis grew

in Washington and most GCC capitals, where it was feared that a new Palestinian-Israeli incident could undermine all the coalition's efforts to force the Iraqis out of Kuwait.

The hostage issue was also creating problems for coalition solidarity. Pressures in coalition capitals had grown in response to Iraqi hints that special treatment would be offered to the hostages of nations that showed a readiness to deal with Iraq. Various unofficial and semiofficial emissaries readied themselves to test the waters in Baghdad, amidst fears among the coalition governments that the Iraqis could use hostage releases as a means to exacerbate intracoalition tensions. As October progressed, coalition governments tried to coordinate their approaches and limit the appearance of divisiveness, but a number of unofficial, semiofficial, and even official delegations (in the case of the Soviet Union) began to visit Baghdad.

Elder statesmen with unclear mandates from their governments, such as ex-Prime Ministers Heath of the United Kingdom, Brandt of Germany, Nakasone of Japan, Jorgenson of Denmark, and Lang of New Zealand, joined the parade, which lasted into November. Each visitor obtained, after negotiation, the release of some or all of his nation's hostages, but none of them ultimately could commit their governments to any meaningful concessions. The Iraqis consequently wound up releasing the hostages with little or nothing to show for it, other than the satisfaction of watching the unhappiness of the coalition's hawks as they were obliged to witness senior statesmen beg for concessions. In the final analysis, the indignity of the process and the repulsiveness of the Iraqi hostage strategy may only have served to harden attitudes toward Iraq rather than the other way around.

Soviet contacts with the Iraqis were also active in October, although the situation of the over 5,000 Soviet specialists still working in Iraq seemed to be less of a motivating factor than the hope that Soviet diplomacy and previously amicable relations with Iraq could produce a compromise settlement. The Soviet government, with an increasing internal split between reformers and hard-liners, continued to move in two directions at once on many issues: the military wanted the Soviet technicians to stay in Iraq, while the Foreign Ministry wanted them out, for example. Even the efforts of the principal Soviet envoy to Iraq, Yevgeni Primakov, were diminished by a virtual disavowal of his effort passed quietly to the Americans by Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. Not to be discouraged, Primakov traveled to Baghdad several times during October, and to other coalition capitals in between, attempting by shuttle diplomacy to introduce Soviet-inspired negotiating packages and to build some negotiating momentum through positive interpretations of Iraqi statements. Stressing the risks of a solution by force and possible violent reactions in Arab capitals to a war, he tried to find a face-saving compromise for Saddam in Western capitals and a commitment to withdrawal in Baghdad. In the end, he achieved neither.

In Washington on October 19, President Bush told Primakov that the hints of possible movement on withdrawal, which the Soviet had so far elicited from the Iraqis, were inadequate; Bush also called Gorbachev to reiterate his negative reaction to the Primakov package. The Soviets, sensing an increasing hawkishness in other coalition capitals and eager to avert hostilities in which their client would likely be crushed, were not ready to stop seeking a political compromise. Primakov traveled

once again to Baghdad at the end of the month with the aim of getting a clearer commitment to withdrawal from the cagey Iraqi leader. Once again, however, he received no commitment from Saddam, and the Soviets had to drop their initiative—but not the idea, as will be seen later.

In spite of Iraq's unbending stance on withdrawal, and the Soviet Union's obvious lack of negotiating leverage in Baghdad, Primakov and, to a lesser extent, Gorbachev would continue to try for a Soviet-engineered deus ex machina that could resolve a dangerous crisis where their national interests were divided. Continued Soviet waffling, unfortunately, probably gave Saddam reason to hope that he could eventually split the coalition. Ironically, it also reinforced the growing determination among the hawks in the coalition to find an early and decisive solution, before their common front collapsed.

8

Moving Beyond Sanctions

PRESSURE TO BRING ABOUT AN EARLY SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS GREW throughout October. The political and military standoffs that were developing did not favor the coalition's cause in a number of ways. The numerous UN resolutions had succeeded in isolating Iraq, but there were few new initiatives that could be taken in that forum to further increase the pressure on Iraq's leaders. More troublesome was the fact that Saddam's regime had to a degree nullified its isolation with an increasingly successful effort to reach public opinion over the heads of the coalition governments, thus broadening the debate over its occupation of Kuwait to one about the future of the Middle East and the Israeli occupation. Moreover, the sanctions, although increasingly effective in a physical sense, had produced no softening of Iraq's hard line. In fact, concern was growing that Iraq's ability to ride out the sanctions might turn out to be greater that the coalition's ability to sustain them. The Soviet political initiative of October, for example, began from a premise that the sanctions would not cause the Iraqis to soften their position and that the alternatives were likely to boil down to war or a political compromise.

A prolonged confrontation with Iraq was also likely to have growing political costs. A number of coalition governments had to cope with varying degrees of internal

opposition to strong measures against Iraq, as well as sympathy for Iraq's tactic of linking the issues of Kuwait and Middle East peace. Empathy with Iraq's civilian population, and distaste for the rich Gulf Arab members of the coalition, strong in the capitals of Arab and Muslim coalition members such as Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, and Malaysia, also existed to varying degrees in countries such as the Soviet Union, Spain, Italy, France, and the United States. Recognizing their vulnerability on this front, and worried about the long-term staying power of some of their coalition partners, the Gulf Arabs were increasingly anxious for an early conclusion to the crisis and were pushing for military action.

Iraq's partially successful and divisive tactics on hostage releases had, in addition, shown that the solidarity of the coalition was questionable. The Primakov mission, and an apparent readiness by other coalition members such as France to take up an intermediary role, added further questions about the long-term ability of the coalition to pull together in the event of a prolonged stalemate.

The long-term political outlook therefore was not entirely favorable to the coalition, which especially had to fear that another crisis such as the Jerusalem incident could lead to an open split among its members. With Iraqi intelligence operatives manifestly attempting to create trouble around the world, the possibility of an incident that could fracture the coalition was always present.

Finally, practical military considerations also played an important part in raising the pressure for an early resolution of the crisis. The initial American deployment was scheduled to be completed in November, and decisions were needed on whether to scale back the effort or to keep units flowing to the zone of confrontation. The military

balance in the Gulf was headed toward a costly stalemate: paying for the large forces already positioned in the Gulf was likely to be even more controversial in coalition capitals if the troops were sitting in the desert without effect. Moreover, as the troops finished their training and settled down for a period of waiting, concern grew about the potential for damaging incidents among the various forces in the coalition or with their Saudi and Gulf hosts. Even the period of waiting seemed to have some natural deadlines: the Muslim months of fasting and pilgrimage would occur in the spring of 1991, creating serious complications for operations and greater potential for incidents. Following that, the onset of hot weather would ensure that the expensive stalemate would continue until autumn 1991.

America Raises the Stakes

It was in this atmosphere that President Bush and his top advisers met, at the end of October, to determine the next steps. Briefed several weeks earlier by his military advisers that they needed an approximate doubling of the forces available to them in order to break the developing stalemate and force the Iraqis out of Kuwait, the President agreed on October 31 to commit the extra troops. This was not—yet—a decision to take military action. It did, however, lead inexorably to a compounding of most of the factors discussed above and increased the pressure to use the forces thus deployed—provided, of course, that an acceptable political settlement was not found in the interim. At the same time, knowledge that a military option would now be available perceptibly changed the parameters of any political settlement that would be acceptable to the powers that had the major say in the use of that

force: the United States and Saudi Arabia. Increasingly, policy deliberations and military planning in Washington and Riyadh focused on how to cut Iraq's military capability and weapons programs down to size and to push it out of Kuwait.

Interestingly, the American decision was taken without prior consultation with major coalition partners or with Congress. The British, Kuwaitis, and Saudis, as the leading hawks, could be expected to welcome the announcement, but most other coalition members, particularly the Soviets, were likely to have major reservations about the possibilities that a doubling of the forces would create for American unilateral action; they could be expected to argue for creation of an international legal framework defined by UN resolutions. With hopes for the "new international order," which he had proposed in late September, depending on major power cooperation, President Bush had some sympathy for this point of view and agreed to seek a UN Security Council resolution authorizing use of the soon-to-be-expanded force.

The President and his advisers also believed that prior approval by the international community would add credibility to the threat of a forceful end to the Iraqi occupation. At the same time, urgent consultations with the Arab coalition members were needed to clarify their position toward possible Israeli military involvement, given Iraqi threats to attack Israel in the event of hostilities. As a result of all these considerations, public announcement of the force increase was withheld until the allies had been consulted and their support for a UN resolution gained. Not incidentally, President Bush's advisers also thought that a UN resolution authorizing force would help gain support for a similar resolution in Congress.

Secretary of State Baker departed on November 3 for a three-week trip to many of the Security Council and key coalition capitals; his mission was to prepare the ground for a UN resolution authorizing the possible use of force. With the United States in the chair of the Security Council during November, and Yemen scheduled to rotate into the chair in December, Baker was in effect working against a deadline to clinch favorable council action within the month. The draft resolution that he proposed was simple but far-reaching: the UN would authorize the coalition members "cooperating with Kuwait" to employ force to implement the previous demand for Iraqi withdrawal, unless the Iraqis had withdrawn by a given deadline. Beginning his trip in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, and Egypt, he secured solid support for a UN resolution as well as assurances that those countries would fight even if Israel were drawn into the fighting. Meeting with the Chinese foreign minister, who was passing through Cairo, Baker obtained a confirmation that the Chinese would not vote against the resolution (as they had already told the American Ambassador in Peking). While the Chinese disagreed with the principle of authorizing force against a UN member, they wanted even more to rehabilitate their relations with the United States. Proceeding to Turkey, Baker gained Turkish approval for a resolution, plus their qualified approval for use of Turkish airbases in the event hostilities became necessary.

At his next stop in Moscow, Baker received less support. In addition to their reluctance to give the Americans an open authorization, the Soviet leaders were concerned (correctly, it turned out) that a deadline would be interpreted in Baghdad as an unacceptable ultimatum, thereby making inevitable the very hostilities that the threat of

force was supposedly designed to avoid. The Soviets did not give a definitive answer, raising instead the idea of a "goodwill delay" to postpone the deadline and promising an answer at the European summit scheduled for later that month in Paris. That answer, given by Chairman Gorbachev to President Bush on November 19, was supportive but with reservations, the most important of which was that the Soviets intended to make one more effort to convince Saddam that he would have to withdraw before the use of force became inevitable. (This Soviet desire to broker a negotiated settlement, if at all possible, led in short order to back-to-back visits to Moscow by Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz and his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud, each trying to influence the potential Soviet initiative.)

Secretary Baker, in the meantime, had gathered additional support for the resolution in London, Brussels, Paris, and Geneva. Lack of serious European annoyance over the Americans' lack of consultation or prior notice of the force increase had been somewhat surprising, particularly in view of the fact that the additional forces were to be drawn from Europe. While in Europe, Baker also met with senior officials from Security Council members Ethiopia, Zaire, and Cote d'Ivoire, as well as coalition contributors Finland and Romania, and obtained their approval. On the way back to Washington, he met the only rejection of his trip in Yemen, where President Saleh withheld support for the resolution. Stopping in Bogota and Los Angeles on the way back to Washington, Baker received an endorsement of the resolution from the Colombians and a grudging agreement to go along from the Malaysian foreign minister, who had flown from Kuala Lumpur for the meeting. Back in New York, Baker met with the Cuban foreign minister, who, as expected, refused to give his

country's support to the proposed resolution. Negotiations with the Chinese also continued in the hope of obtaining a positive vote, but in the end the Chinese abstained. Nonetheless, the Secretary's trip, reinforced at key points by President Bush's telephone diplomacy , had successfully assured that there would be enough votes to pass the resolution—and no veto.

Back to the United Nations

The early Security Council resolutions had provided the nucleus of international legality and acceptability around which the United States and its allies had been able to rally an impressively broad, well-financed, and superbly armed coalition. Passage of Security Council Resolution 678 on November 29, authorizing the use of force, assured that the Security Council would also be central to any peace settlement, if hostilities were eventually launched under its authority.

The hope of most members voting for the resolution, however, continued to be that the Iraqi regime would recognize that its position was untenable and withdraw—preferably without conditions as the resolutions required, but possibly after some bargaining. The most sensitive issue on the negotiating table was likely to be Iraq's continuing demand that any withdrawal from Kuwait lead to negotiations on Middle East peace. Even the Americans had acknowledged the need to push for post–crisis movement toward a peace conference, although still refusing to approve of any linkage that would look like a reward to the Iraqi regime. There were no serious efforts among coalition governments, however, to explore possible compromise scenarios. The focus instead continued to be on

finding the leverage that would oblige the Iraqis to recognize the need to withdraw. Iraq's refusal to respond positively to the Soviet mediation in October had dashed cold water on the search for a compromise, particularly in view of the difficulties likely to be encountered in engineering an approved coalition negotiating position.

The Security Council resolution gave Iraq until January 15 to withdraw from Kuwait under the terms of all the previous resolutions; that is, Iraq should return to the situation prevailing on the ground before the invasion of Kuwait, plus accept liability for damages caused to the hostages and to foreign property. The forty-five-day delay was defined as "one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill" for the Iraqis to comply. If they did not, member states were authorized to "use all necessary means to uphold and implement" the Security Council's previous decisions, and to keep the Council informed of their actions. Thus, while the resolution did not explicitly authorize the use of force and did include the Soviet idea of a pause for compliance and negotiation, it was a virtual blank check. The lack of a UN coordination structure meant that the member states had the initiative in selecting the time and nature of hostilities, could interpret the resolutions to suit their needs, and report back to the Security Council as they saw fit.

9

Last Chance for Negotiations

THE UN RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE USE OF FORCE PROVIDED the last notch in the ratchet of peaceful coercion, and the forty-five-day deadline provided a powerful stimulus to those who wished to find a compromise solution. In a bold move, America attempted to occupy the diplomatic high ground with a surprise proposal from President Bush to meet face to face with the Iraqis. Offering to go "an extra mile" to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis, he proposed an exchange of foreign minister visits between Baghdad and Washington. The President's decision, taken partly in the context of his effort to convince Congress that he was not inflexibly bellicose, unfortunately backfired. Not having been cleared with America's allies, the initiative created considerable annoyance, even as the need for coalition coordination had become more acute. A number of coalition members, particularly the Arabs, even feared that the initiative meant that the Americans were prepared to cut a deal with the Iraqis. Moreover, while President Bush may have hoped that the move would forestall some of the many would-be mediators who were ready to offer their services, he may, in the end, only have encouraged them by legitimating the idea of negotiation with Baghdad. Subsequent American clarifications that the administration did not intend to negotiate away the

terms of the UN resolutions neither mollified the coalition's hawks nor discouraged the doves, who considered the American interpretations of those resolutions too rigid.

The Iraqi response to the American offer was positive in principle but negative in practice. Apparently looking on the offer as having been either a first blink by the American administration or a meaningless gesture, the Iraqis entered into a series of procedural ploys that gave every appearance of being a stall rather than an effort to negotiate. By mid-December, the Iraqis were still engaged in scheduling maneuvers; with neither the United States nor Iraq showing much flexibility, serious negotiations appeared unlikely. The UN deadline seemed only to have hardened Saddam's determination not to withdraw under pressure. Even a last-ditch peace effort by Iraq's Arab allies, the PLO, Jordan, and Yemen, had failed in early December to soften Iraq's insistence that it would withdraw only under negotiated conditions.

The Lines Harden

Deadlock on the negotiating track was welcomed by the hawks in the coalition. The key Arab allies (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria) met early in December in Cairo, where they issued a strongly worded warning to Iraq, after being reassured by American promises that there would be no last-minute concessions to the Iraqis if the Baker-Aziz talks ever got launched. Meanwhile, on the military front the coalition was growing more capable each week. President Bush's trip to Damascus and Cairo following the late November European summit had reconfirmed that the Syrians and Egyptians would reinforce their troop contin-

gents and fight alongside the Americans, even if a war broadened to include Israel. The French had also announced an increase in their force contribution and requested to be included in planning for the main attack. That planning was well developed, and as new units arrived from Europe and elsewhere they were moved to the forward theater and exercised in their war-fighting roles. Even though the congressional debate on authorizing the use of force was still hotly contested in Washington (it was only resolved January 12), the military option was rapidly taking on reality.

Iraq's leadership, in a surprise move, suddenly removed one of the last obstacles to a shooting war. On December 6, it began releasing the over 3,400 foreign hostages still held in Iraq and Kuwait. In so doing, Saddam may have been trying to buy time or goodwill in the West, but instead he only strengthened his enemies and removed one of the incentives for compromise on the part of his opponents.

Interest in a negotiated settlement, at least in Washington, had in fact begun to fade earlier. The primary American goal from the beginning had been an unconditional withdrawal, and American negotiators had consistently taken the position that there be no rewards to Iraq for abandoning its aggression. Faced with Iraq's continued obstinacy over months of stalemate, that position had hardened gradually toward the desire to impose a cost on Iraq for its aggression. In this evolution, the stated American goal of assuring the future security of the region began to encompass an unstated objective of cutting back Iraq's ability to make trouble in the future. Reduction of Iraq's war-fighting capability indeed became a reasonable goal once a military option became possible in late No-

vember, but it was a goal that the policymakers chose not to articulate clearly, because it was not shared by all the members of the coalition (not to mention the U.S. Congress) and fell well outside the specific authorities of the UN resolutions. This hidden objective gave rise to a hypothetical but feared "nightmare scenario": Saddam Hussein—whether on his own or as part of a negotiated deal—might at the eleventh hour agree to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait and also to meet the terms of the other UN resolutions. By so doing he could save his entire military capability, undercut the coalition's political basis, oblige the withdrawal of most of the coalition forces, yet still retain the ability to threaten Kuwait or his other neighbors at will. Fear that a negotiated settlement could lead to some variation on this scenario led to anxiety in Washington about all mediation efforts conducted by the coalition allies.

The Mediators Step Forward

With the U.S.-Iraqi bilateral track bogged down, other mediation efforts were required if a war was to be avoided. The UN provided one opportunity as the Security Council had become seized once again with the Arab-Israeli issue as a result of Israeli deportation practices. The debate inevitably widened to encompass the Gulf Crisis and allowed the proponents of linkage to demand clauses in the draft resolution that, they hoped, might allow Iraq to climb back from the brink by holding out the promise of a future Middle East peace conference. After heated debate, American opposition to such linkage, and the failure of the resolution's supporters to convince other council members that their additions could actually change the

Iraqi position on withdrawal, led to passage of a resolution condemning the Israeli practices without mention of a peace conference. The vote of 9–6 showed, however, that desire for a negotiated settlement remained strong.

Several members of the European Community were particularly anxious over the drift toward war and wanted the EC to play a role in seeking a peaceful settlement. They pushed their Council President, Italian Prime Minister Andreotti, to step in to fill the negotiating void. The United States, on the other hand, did not welcome an EC role at this late hour and attempted to reassure the council members by various means (including letters from President Bush to Andreotti) that American efforts to meet with the Iraqis were ongoing and sincere. The EC's own internal divisions complicated its efforts, which in the end resulted only in a proposal to the Iraqis in early January that an Iraqi-EC meeting follow the U.S.-Iraqi one. The effort ended when the Iraqis turned down the EC proposal insultingly, calling the Europeans' offer "submissive" to American diplomacy.

In addition to this official EC foray into mediation, there were also mediation efforts by more indirect means. One, by Yugoslav Foreign Minister Loncar (reportedly with German backing), resulted in a trip to Baghdad at the end of December to explore the possibility of a European mediation, to which the Iraqis gave no encouragement. A second approach, which combined the French politician Pisani and ex-Algerian President Ben Bella and tried to create a dialogue in Geneva with Saddam Hussein's brother Barzan Tikriti, also produced no measurable results. The Algerian government also put its reputation as an excellent mediator to the test by engaging President Benjedid in a trip to Baghdad on December 20, only to find

the Iraqis still following a hard line on withdrawal and the Saudis angry at the Algerians for intervening.

The French also made a sustained effort to find a formula to avert the looming hostilities. Even though French military cooperation with the coalition had become wholehearted since the resignation of Minister of Defense Chevenement in protest over the decision to increase the French contingent, strong political pressures (including the presence of a large Muslim community in France) impelled President Mitterrand to declare that he was prepared to work "to the last moment" for a diplomatic solution. At the beginning of January, an "unofficial" visit to Baghdad by a senior National Assembly figure was widely considered to have Mitterrand's backing as an effort to sound out Baghdad's views on a French initiative. Several days later, the French surfaced a peace plan that would have required unconditional Iraqi withdrawal in return for a pledge from the coalition not to attack the withdrawing troops, and a promise to hold a Middle East peace conference at a later date. This linkage, predictably, met with an American rejection—both by President Bush and, a few days later, by Secretary Baker in Paris. Mitterrand did not persist with the proposal, but he did not drop an activist French role either; he was at the same time in touch with the Algerian and Moroccan leaders about a possible joint initiative. While that effort also came to naught, the French made one last effort at the UN.

Following the failures of both the Baker-Aziz meeting (which was finally held in Geneva January 9), and the UN Secretary General's trip to Baghdad, the French effort was all but a forlorn hope. Nevertheless, the French delegation first tabled a draft resolution on January 14 and, when that failed, a proposed Security Council statement. As both

approaches contained promises of future Middle East peace conferences, the United States and the United Kingdom successfully opposed them on the grounds that each offered a reward to Iraq that was entirely unjustified by the unbending line being maintained, both publicly and privately, by Saddam.

UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar also made a last-hour effort to avert a shooting war, which unfortunately was probably doomed from the start. While the American government nominally supported the effort and President Bush had met with the Secretary General before his departure, Perez de Cuellar had no negotiating authority and was constrained, in his meeting with Saddam, to urging Iraqi compliance with all the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Upon his return to New York, he briefed the Security Council on January 14 concerning his failure to elicit Iraqi movement. He also issued a call to reason, stating that a satisfactory resolution to the crisis would enable Middle East peace efforts to move forward. With that, the international community could do little more and abandoned its efforts to obtain a peaceful Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

The air war started January 16.

Diplomacy and Hostilities

The imminence or even the actuality of hostilities did not, of course, put an end to diplomacy. On the eve of the UN deadline, Secretary Baker began a final trip to key coalition capitals on January 8, with the objective of firming up mutual understandings should hostilities occur. Traveling first to England, France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, he obtained assurance of solidarity, military facilities (in

Spain and in newly reunited Germany), and financial support (in Germany).

On January 9, Baker finally met with Foreign Minister Aziz in Geneva. As the two senior diplomats, however, failed to find any common ground or point of agreement, the coalition members resigned themselves to the virtual inevitability of war.

Proceeding on to the Middle East, Baker gained additional financial support for the United States and such frontline states as Turkey from the Saudis, Kuwaitis, and United Arab Emirates. Equally important, he obtained their reassurances of solidarity in case Israel were attacked and retaliated; he also sought the Gulf Arabs' promises to help keep Syria committed to the coalition effort throughout hostilities. The latter subject was also an important part of Baker's subsequent discussions in Egypt. Following Cairo, he traveled to Syria to seek—though he did not obtain—a solid Syrian commitment with respect to the Israeli scenario. Baker's next stop was in Turkey for a last check with this important ally whose Parliament has just authorized the allies' use of Turkish bases. A final return visit to Riyadh, following the U.S. Congress's January 12 vote authorizing the President to use force if necessary, firmed up support and clarified communications for the outbreak of hostilities.

Baker's trip had reaffirmed the preparedness of the coalition's key members for the test ahead. Although the French were still trying to find a diplomatic exit to the crisis, and America's relations with the Soviet Union had suddenly gone frigid as a result of Gorbachev's turn to the right and the Soviet intervention in Lithuania, there was no reason to fear a serious break in the coalition's ranks should hostilities soon occur.

Syria's commitment to a war effort had always been questionable, and remained so at the very eve of the war. Even its commitment to help liberate Kuwait did not imply a readiness to cross the Iraqi border (as was also the case with Egypt and the Gulf Arabs.) The military planners had worked around this anomaly in the fighting force in designing the war plan. Under the plan, the Arab forces continued to serve under Saudi command (and thus only indirectly under direction from the American command), but they had been assigned roles in the campaign that would give them a part in the liberation of Kuwait, but would not require them to pursue Iraqi troops into Iraq itself.

Because of this reluctance on the part of a number of the coalition's Arab members to engage in war beyond the strict terms of the UN resolutions authorizing the liberation of Kuwait (a reluctance shared to some degree by many others), invasion of Iraq by the full coalition was out of the question. Moreover, any long-term planning to capture Baghdad, or for a long-term occupation of Iraqi territory, would almost surely have divided the coalition and required unilateral American action. Consequently, it was never seriously contemplated. In the short-term, the military and political planners had enough to worry about in estimating the staying power of their Arab partners in the event of a prolonged battle that involved strikes between Iraq and Israel.

As war became increasingly likely, America also sought to assure that its relationship with Israel was in the best possible situation to bear the inevitable strains of the coming confrontation. Iraq had promised publicly that it would attack Israel in the event of hostilities, intending to split the coalition by broadening the conflict. With a

policy and tradition of retaliating forcefully for any attacks against it, the Israeli government was poised to act if necessary. Senior American diplomats and defense officials had kept in close touch with Israel, seeking to meet its defensive needs while asking Israel to exercise maximum possible restraint in the event of an attack against it. By early January, Patriot antimissile defense systems had been offered, a hot-line communications link established, and intelligence exchange expedited, but the Israelis, who wanted real-time information and deeper operational coordination, remained uneasy over their isolation and exposure.

The second day of the war, January 17, saw the first Iraqi Scud missiles fall on Tel Aviv; they would fall regularly thereafter. The Israelis asked the Americans to send the promised Patriot air-defense missiles as soon as possible. More ominously, they began planning retaliatory raids into western Iraq and requested "deconfliction" arrangements that would allow their planes to fly into the war zone without risk of shooting or being shot at by coalition aircraft. While the other members of the coalition watched nervously to see if the situation would remain under control, American officials began a high-level and intense effort to reassure the Israelis that the Scud threat could be managed by coalition forces. Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger and Defense Undersecretary Wolfowitz, who had just returned from an earlier mission, were sent back to Tel Aviv to maintain high-level contact and urge restraint. To support the Scud hunt, which the U.S. military command had begun, the Israeli military was provided with a liaison that could expedite their intelligence and targeting contributions, but they were denied what they wanted more: real-time intelligence, a

liaison within the Riyadh command, or the all-important codes that would deconflict an Israeli air strike. By early February, the Israelis had developed a plan for major air strikes into western Iraq, and Defense Minister Arens traveled to Washington to argue for a "green light." President Bush, who by that time had talked with Prime Minister Shamir a number of times by telephone and sensed that he was more inclined to restraint than his defense minister, pointed to the immense coalition effort already underway to find and destroy the Scuds, urged continued restraint, and still denied the deconfliction arrangements.

To the chagrin of many in the Israeli military, the green light was never given for a retaliatory raid. Prime Minister Shamir was satisfied that there was little to gain by such an operation, in view of the pounding that the Iraqis were already receiving from the coalition, and much to lose if Israeli entry into the war prejudiced the coalition's chances for a crushing victory. Fortunately, casualties in Israel were light from the Scud raids, and the cost of Israeli military inaction more damaging to short-term popular morale than to life or property.

The failure of Iraq's strategy to embroil Israel in the shooting war was disastrous for Saddam. It assured that the popular antiwar, anticoalition reaction in Arab capitals, which he had been counting on to undermine his opponents' war effort, never reached the necessary intensity. Iraq was left alone to face the coalition and its eventual ground attack.

Before the ground attack was launched, however, there was a last diplomatic effort to stop it before it started. The Soviets, who had earlier tried to set a delay in the date of the air campaign, once again seemed more interested in avoiding the war than Saddam himself. Chairman Gor-

bachev began the Soviet effort on January 19, proposing to President Bush that the coalition call a unilateral two-day suspension of the bombing. Although the Soviet leader had attempted at the same time to interest Baghdad in accepting an unconditional withdrawal in exchange for the cease-fire, he had no assurance of an adequate Iraqi response. (In fact, the Iraqis subsequently refused his offer by radio broadcast!) The weakness of the Gorbachev proposal allowed President Bush to turn him down readily. A week later, new Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh was in Washington for consultations, during which he agreed to a joint statement that tied the Soviets into the war effort, but nonetheless created a stir by appearing to suggest that the two parties were opening the ground for a negotiation with Baghdad. While the Americans in subsequent days attempted to set the record straight, the Soviets were readying a final mission to Baghdad by Primakov designed to find a negotiated solution if possible.

Primakov traveled to Iraq on February 10, where he was able for the first time to engage Saddam seriously on the possibility of unconditional withdrawal. On the basis of that minimal Iraqi movement, Primakov returned to Moscow, where on February 15 the Soviets put forth a package proposal that called for a pause in the hostilities and a phased and conditional Iraqi withdrawal under guarantees. In Washington, this was a nonstarter: President Bush rejected it publicly and called it "a cruel hoax." Not to be denied, however, the Soviets had agreed to a visit by Iraqi Foreign Minister Aziz to Moscow for another effort to negotiate an acceptable package. These Soviet-Iraqi exchanges were punctuated by a number of Bush-Gorbachev phone exchanges, which helped the Soviets set

the parameters for the package they were trying to develop. The talks concluded on February 22 with a final proposal, which called for an immediate cease-fire, withdrawal over three weeks, and annulment of all the UN resolutions passed after August 3, but no link to Middle East peace. An improvement over any terms proposed thus far, the new package nonetheless was fatally weakened by the fact that it lacked the Saddam's approval. Moreover, in presenting this proposal to the Americans, the Soviets made the mistake of hinting that they might take it to the Security Council for a broader review. Bush, who had perhaps been obliged to go along with the Soviet gambit in order to maintain good working relations with the Soviet head of government, found the last Soviet proposal no less unattractive than the previous ones. Moreover, there was not the slightest assurance that Foreign Minister Aziz and the Soviets would be able to sell the proposition to Saddam Hussein.

While Bush promised Gorbachev that he would discuss the matter with the other members of the coalition, he and his advisers decided on February 22 that they could not let this version of the "nightmare scenario" play out or be sent to the UN, where the French and Egyptians were showing signs of readiness to delay the ground offensive. In order to re-seize the initiative, they decided instead to issue an ultimatum: the Iraqi withdrawal should start on February 24 and take no more than seven days to complete. Even though Aziz announced in Moscow, several hours before the expiry of the deadline, that Baghdad had accepted the terms and would begin its withdrawal, his announcement was too late and too indirect to be convincing. Seen as more eloquent of Saddam's true frame of mind was the literal and figurative poisoning of the atmo-

sphere caused by his decision to set fire to the Kuwaiti oil wells.

The ground war started February 23.

Diplomacy failed to avert the war because, by October, the major protagonists gave very little room for negotiation. Almost from the beginning of the crisis, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Gulf Arabs had insisted on full compliance with the UN resolutions, no renegotiation of their terms, and no new linkages. Some had even hardened their preferred terms to include a major Iraqi defeat. Although these conditions were not supported by all the members of the coalition, the group's ultimate negotiating flexibility was never tested. Try as they might, the Soviet and other mediators had never convinced the Iraqi leadership to make a serious negotiation possible by acceding to the basic demand that all members of the coalition did support—full withdrawal from Kuwait. This Iraqi inflexibility only assured, in the end, that the coalition's terms were set by its more unyielding members.

Saddam may, in fact, have calculated that the efforts of the mediators demonstrated a fatal weakness of the coalition: that it did not have the stomach for war, particularly one involving Israel. Iraq's refusal to take advantage of or to explore seriously the various negotiating efforts, especially the Soviet ones, may have been tactical at first, but appeared to be driven by sheer obstinacy in the end. Rather than capitalize on the "nightmare scenario," which might have been achievable, Saddam chose to test the mettle of the coalition in battle. It was a very costly error.

10

Forcing Peace

THE ONE-HUNDRED-HOUR GROUND WAR WAS PUNCTUATED BY A number of Iraqi and Soviet efforts to seek a cease-fire in New York, on the pretext that Iraq's February 25 withdrawal order had met the UN's demands. It was too late, however, and none of these efforts gained a hearing. The war proceeded to its rapid military conclusion, with solidarity among the coalition's combatants enhanced by the magnitude of their victory and the absence of serious pro-Iraqi demonstrations in the Arab world. The fighting concluded with the unilateral decision of the Americans to offer a cease-fire on February 28. This the Iraqis rapidly accepted, partly as a result of advice from the Soviets, who remained anxious to save their old client from a greater humiliation. Iraqi statements also announced Iraqi agreement to abide by the twelve UN resolutions. The fighting was over.

Peace terms, however, remained to be worked out. The UN resolutions were the obvious starting point, as they had legitimated the war and now served as the only accepted basis of a settlement. But they had been negotiated with a view to correcting Iraq's violations of international law instead of resolving a post–hostilities situation. Nor did they represent the product of any concerted coalition effort to plan for crisis termination or the

shape of a post–crisis world; the internal contradictions of the coalition had made discussion of the topic inadvisable earlier, and the speed of the campaign had made it largely impossible during the fighting. Even the Americans had not developed a political strategy for conflict termination. Rather, the war planning strategy—which included the military aim of severely reducing Iraq's war-fighting potential—was expected to shape the nature of the peace. That indeed turned out to be the case, but it meant that the political implications of the initial cease-fire conditions, the presence or absence of demilitarized zones, the form of Iraqi surrender, and other elements of an overall settlement were not well worked out, if at all. In these circumstances, the terms of the peace remained to be negotiated after the hostilities: on the ground, at the Security Council, and among the coalition members.

The first step, however, was to obtain an internationally sanctioned cease-fire. Security Council negotiations resulted in passage of a resolution on March 2 that called for an end to the shooting, but did not remove the threat of renewed use of force under Resolution 678 or the sanctions already in place. Those elements of coercion would not be removed until Iraq had complied with the twelve UN resolutions, as well as a number of military conditions such as release of prisoners and demarcation of minefields. The new resolution also reaffirmed the independence and territorial integrity of both Kuwait and Iraq, but nonetheless was considered too harsh and intrusive by some council members. It passed with only eleven yes votes; Cuba voted no and China, Yemen, and India (a new member of the council) abstained.

Iraq, having little choice in the matter, announced on March 3 its readiness to abide by the terms of the resolu-

tion. Earlier in the same day, at Safwan in Iraq, its generals had agreed to the military conditions for the cease-fire. Those military conditions, which had been developed hastily by the Americans with last-minute Saudi concurrence, had the effect of reducing the victors' political options and sources of leverage, because they excluded the possibility of demilitarized zones, formal surrender, or prolonged occupation. The victors had chosen not to further humiliate the Iraqi army, which was seen as the vital center of the Iraqi state in the postwar (and, hopefully, post–Saddam) period.

In the immediate aftermath of the coalition's victory, events began to unfold promisingly. Iraq's acceptance of the cease-fire terms allowed its sympathizers in the Security Council to obtain a partial relaxation of the sanctions for humanitarian food supplies. President Bush, in a speech to Congress, promised that with the Kuwait crisis seemingly over, the United States would engage in a major effort to move the Middle East peace process forward. Indeed, by March 10, Secretary of State Baker would begin his first shuttle trip to the area to launch a negotiating process that would eventually culminate in the Madrid Peace Conference. This American effort had been some months in preparation, but its launching had been held off until it could no longer be considered as a concession to the Iraqis or linked to their withdrawal. To balance this gesture toward its Arab allies, the Americans also approved the military aid package that had helped obtain Israel's wartime restraint. In these first days of euphoria, even the revolt in Iraq, which broke out March 5 in the south and a few days later in Kurdistan, was viewed positively in the hope that it would contribute to Saddam's downfall.

The promise soon faded. The crisis rapidly took on new dimensions, and the terms of peace under negotiation in New York could no longer be limited to resolution of the issues stemming from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The revolt in Iraq, rather than bringing down Saddam, instead rallied the defeated but still powerful military to his leadership. In suppressing the revolt during the latter part of March, Iraqi military forces committed atrocities, as well as a number of near-contraventions of the cease-fire terms, which inflamed the situation and prompted calls for eliminating Iraq's war-making capability. New revelations concerning Iraq's programs to produce weapons of mass destruction and the plight of the Kurdish refugees, who fled to Turkey after the crushing of their revolt at the beginning of April, both added new elements to the search for peace conditions. The terms that Iraq would be asked to accept became progressively tougher as the crisis in that country continued.

In New York, agreement on the general principles of a settlement was reached fairly rapidly. Nonetheless, the negotiations were slowed by the complicated technical nature of some of the demands, such as the compensation mechanisms or the means for assuring compliance with conditions requiring elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the uncertainty of the situation in Iraq, the turnover of a number of Security Council members, and the loss of some of the prewar negotiating momentum and sense of solidarity also contributed to a slow negotiating pace.

The Security Council resolution to end the war, Resolution 687, known as "The Mother of All Resolutions," finally came to a vote on April 5. It established a timetable that linked the removal of the sanctions to Iraqi compli-

ance with a series of demands: Iraq's necessity to recognize Kuwait in its 1960 borders, payment of compensation to Kuwaiti and other parties, cooperation on identification and destruction of chemical and biological weapons and long-distance launchers, payment of reparations, acceptance of border observers, and the restoration of peace and security in the area. Over five years later, some of these conditions are not yet met, and the full import or accepted interpretation of others, such as the "restoration of peace and security in the area," have not yet been fully tested. The resolution has not assured peace, but it has provided a framework for the continuing political struggle with Saddam Hussein's regime.

Although the resolution imposed severe new conditions, they nonetheless were supported by a solid majority of the Security Council and coalition members because of Iraq's unacceptable behavior during the crushing of its internal revolt, and in challenging the cease-fire conditions. The council's nonaligned members had resisted the majority's efforts to prejudge the definition of the Iraq-Kuwait border in the resolution, but it nevertheless passed 12–1, with only Cuba voting against it. Russia and China joined the other permanent members of the council in voting yes, while Yemen and Ecuador abstained. The Iraqis, who had some input into the negotiations through a liaison with the American delegation, were nevertheless faced with a virtual fait accompli. The peace terms had in effect been negotiated among the coalition members, not with their recent adversary. This virtually assured that, even though the Iraqi Parliament officially accepted the terms on April 6, their interpretation would be contentious. The war was over, but the struggle over compliance was just beginning.

The solidarity of the coalition that had obliged Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait had peaked. Many of the members of the coalition, having helped in the war effort, were disinterested in a prolonged struggle with Iraq over Kurdish rights or Iraqi weapons programs; their attention flagged. Even the solidarity of the Western powers had begun to break down when it came to devising an appropriate reaction to the situation in northern Iraq and Kurdistan. Members of the European Community, perhaps in reaction to their inability to take a stronger joint stance before the Gulf War, found themselves more united in urging for strong measures in favor of the Kurdish refugees. In early April, a French-proposed Security Council resolution authorized international aid organizations to help the Kurds inside Iraq, and an EC summit called for the creation and international protection of Kurdish safe havens in northern Iraq. The United States was distinctly wary of these proposals, which compromised Iraqi sovereignty just after the conclusion of a war in which the international community had united to reject Iraq's violation of Kuwaiti sovereignty. The United States was persuaded to agree to both proposals, partly in return for past European solidarity during the Kuwait crisis. But, faced with issues of less compelling attention than what had faced them the previous August—the invasion and attempted suppression of a member of the United Nations—the members of the coalition began, from April on, to look more closely to their own particular interests in deciding whether to support joint action in the new struggle to make Iraq comply with the peace terms. The grand coalition no longer had the momentum to impose its way.

11

Conclusions

HERALDED AT THE TIME AS A MODEL FOR RESOLUTION OF FUTURE international crises, the Gulf coalition seems in retrospect to have been more a product of its specific time and circumstances than a reproducible contribution to a new international order. The crisis and the coalition formed to meet it had a number of distinguishing features that made both unique. To begin with, the enormity of Iraq's violation of international norms created an immediate and virtually unanimous international legal-political climate of condemnation. As a result, the coalition formed around an agreed overall objective, and it only remained for its members to find measures that would be both generally acceptable and effective in obliging Iraq to leave Kuwait.

At the same time, America found itself uniquely and extraordinarily positioned to lead the coalition's effort to shape and carry out the UN mandate. The collapse of the Soviet Union had left the United States in a position of unchallenged global superiority, with its former adversary to some degree dependent on American cooperation in coping with its own economic crisis. In these circumstances, few other governments were in a position to oppose, or had interest in opposing, America's leadership when it defined both the crisis and the possible solutions in its own terms. Moreover, forming and supporting the

coalition was aided immensely by the fact that some of its key members had the ability as well as the political will to pay the huge costs of the sanctions, deployments, and ultimately the war itself. Without Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Japanese financing, the effort would have been immeasurably harder. Similarly, the military effort was immensely facilitated by the ready availability of equipment and materiel in Europe, German cooperation in its movement, and the existence of a first-rate Saudi logistics infrastructure to receive it.

All the above made the coalition effort effective, but they were also the product of circumstances that are unlikely to be repeated. In fact, in some ways they did not outlive the crisis itself. The coalition had already begun to change after the liberation of Kuwait, and those of its members who stayed on for the long endgame with the Iraqi regime, and the humanitarian mission in Kurdistan, have done so under a different set of conditions and cooperative arrangements.

The coalition, because of its particular nature and circumstances, provides few templates for future crisis management scenarios. Nevertheless, a number of general conclusions can be drawn: First, leadership changes history. On the American side, President Bush's determined and active leadership was perhaps the single most important factor in shaping the nature of the coalition and its strategy. While Bush was criticized during the crisis for inadequately articulating the coalition's strategic goals, within his administration those goals and his commitment to reverse the Iraqi occupation were well understood, and the machinery of government worked with an exceptional unanimity of purpose and effective coordination of the interagency process. The President's personal contribu-

tion, through his active telephone diplomacy with coalition members and the Israelis, was equally important to the formation and success of the effort. On the Iraqi side, key decisions were unmistakably in Saddam's hands, with less satisfactory results, however, for him. The crisis in many ways represented a personal confrontation between the two leaders, and its resolution was deeply affected by their respective characters, determination, and judgment.

Second, the UN can provide a powerful multiplier for American diplomacy. The Gulf coalition was formed on the foundation of the UN resolutions and the powerful international consensus they created. That UN imprimatur gave legitimacy to the effort in many capitals where there might otherwise have been strong reluctance to follow a purely American lead. In the future the United States, as a defender of the international status quo in most instances, can count on the UN to play a similar role in case of breaches of international law. As a way to gain broad support, it can call upon both the always available Security Council mechanism to address the contravention and the UN's focus on international legality. Indeed, in the Gulf Crisis, the legality conferred by UN resolutions not only broadened the coalition, but also helped persuade a reluctant U.S. Congress to accept the necessity of military measures. It should be evident, on the other hand, that American opportunities to use the UN's capacity as a multiplier improve in direct proportion to the acceptability of our legal case; the UN may not be a good vehicle for pursuing aims that are more narrowly based on predominantly U.S. interests or legal interpretations.

Third, effective crisis diplomacy needs to be based on active and consistent engagement by U.S. diplomats in world capitals—in place long before a crisis breaks out.

The pre-crisis investments that had been made by American embassies in developing broad and constructive relationships with their host governments paid off handsomely in the Gulf coalition effort. While policy was often shaped by the high-level contacts that modern communications make possible, policy execution—from gaining key support on UN resolutions, through lining up military facilities, to enforcing the sanctions and combating the terrorist potential—fell largely to the embassies. Their success demonstrates that it takes well-financed, well-informed, and well-staffed embassies to develop the kind of contacts, engagement, and trust with host governments that pay off in emergencies.

Fourth, the value of intelligence as a leadership tool provides another useful lesson. In the coalition's multilateral and bilateral efforts to enforce the sanctions, raise money, damp down oil prices, or combat terrorism, American information played a key role and most often determined the scope of work. The information did not always prove correct, but it was often the only intelligence consistently available, and it enabled American participants in the various forums to set the agenda and establish the momentum.

Fifth, launching of multilateral efforts on specific problem areas can have a coalition-enhancing effect. The work on military logistics in NATO and on energy price issues in the IEA, the establishment of the Sanctions Committee and the Gulf Financial Group, and other similar measures all helped the coalition's members develop a sense of purpose and build solidarity. The shared work and decisionmaking in these groups moved an ad hoc coalition subtly toward acting like an alliance. While the complexity of the issues caused by the very size of the coalition

effort may have required use of these bodies during the Gulf Crisis, formation of such groups in future crises may be useful simply because of their value in enhancing participation and consultation among members.

Sixth, no clear lesson emerges to deal with the greatest internal weakness of the Gulf coalition: namely, its lack of a policy coordination mechanism other than continual bilateral consultation. Indeed, the lack of such a mechanism had, on balance, positive results for American interests because it allowed the United States to maintain the initiative, to interpret the internationally approved mandates favorably, and to construe the silence of some partners as consent. In this way, for example, the United States was able to take advantage of the UN authorization to use force as a license to seek the destruction of the Iraqi war machine, rather than just its expulsion from Kuwait. However, the lack of agreed coalition policy was a double-edged sword. It gave other members of the coalition similar freedom to interpret the mandate, which allowed them to launch compromise initiatives that could have undercut America's ability to reach its goals. It was only thanks to Iraqi obstinacy that one or another version of the "nightmare scenario" did not result from those diplomatic initiatives and produce an end to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait much different from the one that occurred.

Seventh, another conclusion that flows from the diplomacy of the Gulf Crisis, but is less relevant to questions of coalition effectiveness, concerns the use of economic sanctions. Sanctions enforcement, which can create friction among coalition members over the long run, was not a major source of dissension during the crisis because the sanctions were in place for a relatively short time and the political will to make them work was widely shared. On

the other hand, the sanctions were not at all effective in reversing the behavior of the Iraqi regime against which they were directed. They were a very blunt tool, as the only condition for lifting them was nothing less than an Iraqi political defeat; that is, complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Rather than encouraging Iraqi steps toward compliance, the unconditional sanctions may have simply encouraged Iraqi rigidity—particularly so in view of the known ruthless and determined nature of the Iraqi leader.

Finally, a coalition, once formed, requires extensive diplomatic capital to maintain and, moreover, creates its own, new, and unpredictable political dynamic. While coalition members seek to maintain its solidarity and effectiveness on the one hand, the opponent seeks to find and manipulate the coalition's weak points to break it on the other. The coalition's degree of cohesiveness or weakness can thus become the key issue of the crisis and can strongly influence the means chosen to resolve the situation. In the Gulf Crisis, the American leadership became anxious by October that the coalition's fragility meant that it could not hold together over the long run, that consequently the pace had to be forced for an early conclusion of the crisis—and that the threat or actual use of overwhelming force was the best means to do so. In a parallel calculation, Saddam Hussein seems to have concluded that the same observable weaknesses of the coalition would allow him to dig in, challenge the group to a war, and watch the coalition fall apart when the war widened to include Israel and the coalition forces began to take losses.

This, then, was the great irony of Gulf Crisis diplomacy: that formation of the great coalition made possible

the allied victory, but also strongly influenced the choice of military means to resolve the situation. This was because the perceived weaknesses of the coalition led the leaders of both sides, for different reasons, to choose the path of coercion over compromise.

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Gordon Brown is President of the U.S.-Qatar Business Council, a private sector nonprofit organization interested in promoting commerce and improved relations with the Persian Gulf state of Qatar. During the 1996–97 academic year, he wrote this monograph as an Associate at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

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